Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development
Centre canadien pour le développement de la politique étrangère

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NATIONAL FORUM 2000 ON CANADA'S INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS FOR YOUTH ON WAR-AFFECTED CHILDREN

Students' Commission

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National Forum 2000

and National Forum Youth during
the Conference on
War-Affected Children

GIMLI

WINNIPEG

BEYOND...

A report by The Students Commission

103-07578/

Report on The National Forum 2000

and National Forum Youth during and after the Conference on War-Affected Children

The Process

Each year, the Centre for Foreign Policy Development undertakes a National Forum with Canadians. The summer and fall of 2000, the National Forum was held with Canadian youth in order to seek their advice on the issue of children and conflict and to prepare some of them for the International Conference on War-Affected Children in Winnipeg. The Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development devised a strategy of three streams for The National Forum on War-Affected Children: an internet-based activity and modules for learning, a series of round-table discussions by youth organized by the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver), and a National Forum which brought together 50 youth from across Canada in Gimli, Manitoba.

The internet-based modules gave teachers, youth and youth groups opportunities to learn about the issue prior to the events. The roundtable discussions were held through the late spring and summer, with youth invited to discuss the issues for a day. These discussions were powerful and moving and created a series of recommendations which were carried forward to the National Forum in Gimli, Manitoba for youth to examine. Each roundtable was facilitated by youth, trained for two days by the Centre for Victims of Torture prior to the roundtable. At each roundtable, delegates were invited to apply to attend the National Forum in Gimli.

The Students Commission designed and executed the National Forum in Gimli, Manitoba event, working with staff from the Centre for Foreign Policy Development, and consulting with youth interested in the issue, either from the roundtables, organizations working in the area, or youth applying through the internet.

The Students Commission was also invited to several working group meetings set up by the Secretariat for the Conference on War-Affected Children, and brought youth to some of these events. In time, the Students Commission was asked to continue its work with the National Forum youth by joining the team working on youth participation for the Conference. Linda Dale, executive director of the Children as Peacebuilders Project, headed up the international youth delegate selection, preparation and involvement. The third key member of the team created by the Secretariat, which was led by Gail Cochburn, was Susan Fountain, a UNICEF-NY youth facilitator with a great deal of international experience in education for development and peace.

A selection process was in place to select the 50 applicants for the Forum held in Manitoba. Applicants were encouraged to submit descriptions of their experiences in the area of war affected children. Letters of references were also sent in to recommend delegates for the conference.

A selection team of 5 people from the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture, the Canadian Centre of Foreign Policy Development and Students Commission reviewed the applications and chose the delegates who best fit the criteria. The team was looking for racial diversity, linguistics, first hand knowledge or volunteering experience with organizations, national representation, gender representation, involvement with round table discussion held prior to the conference, and general knowledge of the topic.

What emerged was a 7-part program for Gimli and Winnipeg:

- Sept.6-9: The National Forum in Gimli, Manitoba, where 50 youth who live in Canada met with each other, and during part of the time also met with 25 youth from other countries, and with their international chaperones.
- Sept.6-9: The International Youth Delegates Meeting in Gimli, Manitoba, where 25 youth from war-affected countries met with each other and the Canadian youth. They were selected through a process that focussed on criteria such as analytical ability, actively working on the issues and experience speaking in public.
- Sept 10-12: The Youth Meeting in Winnipeg, Manitoba
- Sept 10-17: The Communications Youth Program in Winnipeg, Manitoba.
- Sept. 13-15: The Experts Meeting in Winnipeg, Manitoba, where youth integrated with Experts.
- Sept 16-17 The Ministerial-level Meeting in Winnipeg, Manitoba, where youth integrated with the officials at the Meeting.
- The Beyond Phase, which continues, where youth continue their actions and activities all over the world.

Clearly the synergies, linkages, and impact of the events went well beyond the imagined initial scope of the project. We have, therefore, in this report touched on all 7 parts of the program. For us, as well as the youth involved, the Beyond Phase is the most significant, and we hope that this report will serve as a useful tool to fuel continued and increased youth action in improving the lives of war affected children, whether in Canada or internationally.

Gimli, Manitoba

Program

In Gimli, Manitoba, 50 Canadian and 25 International delegates gathered to talk about how war has affected each of them. Through a variety of mediums they told their personal stories and discussed the impact of war on them, their peers and families, and what young people can do. Meetings between the National Forum and The International Youth Delegates Meeting were separate and shared.

The "Canadian" youth came from a wide variety of backgrounds; some had been in Canada a few months, others several years, others born here. The born-in-Canada youth came from a mix of francophone, anglophone and aboriginal backgrounds, rural and urban. Backgrounds of others included Colombian, Mexican, Sudanese, Kosovar, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Kurdish, Salvadoran, Iranian, Iraqi, Somalian, and Trinidadian. The international youth came from 16 different countries, with some overlap with the youth from Canada.

The question of "what is a Canadian" was a charged one, for many of the youth identified more with the international youth and their stories, and when talking used the words "my country" to describe the country they had recently left.

We mention this as significant in terms of Canadian policy, because often in the Winnipeg program, the Canadian "war-affected" delegates expressed to us that both the media and conference organizers seemed to place a higher priority on the "international" delegates and their experiences than the delegates from Canada. There would seem to be a significant area of work to be done in terms of looking at how international events significantly affect foreign-born youth in Canada, because of their emotional, and psychological connections to their countries and cultures of origin. In Canadian schools, youth delegates said it was often a area of conflict. It also could provide a significant "teaching" opportunity for making the study of international events and history more relevant to both Canadian born and foreign born students in this country. This was a sensitive issue for the youth. The aboriginal youth also, although quieter in voicing their issues, were steadily pointing out the effects of "occupation" to their peers who were ready to listen. This point came home in one of the small group discussions, when one youth was suggesting that an aboriginal protest had no business at a war-affected children's conference and someone asked "well, whose land do you think you're sitting on?" That table was silent as the penny dropped. In terms of terms of the program, we would recommend that in a blended event of this nature, some time be spent during the program with all delegates together actively discussing the differences in their situations.

The program encouraged a variety of non-verbal activities to accommodate more than 16 languages and set a tone for communal activity, not always based on language. Youthful facilitators and activity leaders encouraged a casual, relaxed approach, with youth seen to be leading and at the front of the room. Games included impromptu dancing lessons, hand and clapping games, and spoons. The informal activities and youth leadership activities were facilitated and led by The Students Commission.

The formal non-verbal program involving art and movement was created and organized by Linda Dale and shared with the National Forum delegates. Large murals were painted by groups, on canvas to display images of what they have seen, felt, heard, and remembered. The murals were then presented to each other, as a means of opening up discussion and sharing information.

Masks were constructed, to demonstrate communication without language, and to illustrate images of war, peace and peace-building. A movement workshop by Christina Medina, a Winnipeg dance instructor, demonstrated how concepts and statements could be communicated without language. Delegates worked from the canvas murals to develop the movement workshop. Christina was crucial to the success of many of these activities.

Youth also shared their personal stories in a safe environment using drama, music and speech, while some international delegates told their stories through their whisper translators.

The large group was split into small discussion and activity teams, organized to limit the number of languages each group needed to translate. The teams worked together for the time they were in Gimli. Teams combined both Canadian and international delegates and generated recommendations.

For some parts of the program, the international delegates met separately, as the International Youth Delegates Meeting was designed and executed by Linda Dale. During the separated parts of the program, the Canadian National Forum delegates met to consider the recommendations from the Roundtables, amend them and add others based on their discussions with themselves and the international delegates. The program began as integrated between the groups, particularly as Linda Dale's team was occupied collecting and greeting international delegates at the airport, and Students Commission staff looked after greeting and settling the international delegates in at the Gimli facility.

Steven Lee, Executive Director of the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development, officially welcomed, addressed and thanked the youth for the efforts. Peter Moore and Tim Wilbur of the Centre provided invaluable assistance in facilitating and guiding youth in their discussions. Gail Cockburn, from the Secretariat, Susan Fountain, UNICEF facilitator, and lead facilitator for the Winnipeg portion of the meeting, Kim Rebenchuk from Senator Landon Pearson's office, and Hilary Holmes from Amnesty International Canada were also present for continuity and to provide assistance, particularly in the content area. Students Commission staff and volunteers (11) , mostly aged 19-25, provided, programming and team leadership for The National Forum. The program was run in English and French, with consecutive translation by staff and youth volunteers, with whisper translation for Spanish and other languages. The contribution of the international chaperones was immeasureable, and exhausting for them through the entire event.

Media were invited to attend during lunch hour at the end of the Forum to interview youth who wished to give interviews, and the media coverage was good. Peter Moore, Tim Wilbur of the Centre and Maureen Scherman of The Students Commission co-ordinated the media, ensuring that youth were accompanied during interviews, and felt comfortable with the questions asked.

Gimli, Manitoba Recommendations

Team one

- Make sure media gets daily coverage about international news daily and in depth
- Allow more refugees into Canada and improve system for immigration *
- **educate children within schools about current events and refugees*
- student welcome committees for refugees at schools*
- projects i.e. awareness week, presentations teleconferences correspondence (e-mail, chats, mail)
- letters to the editor instead of by media
- stricter consequences for bullying by teachers and youth
- co-op system for refugees to get better jobs
- Canadian government increasing programs like ESL and FSL
- More conference and Roundtable discussions

Team three

- More media attention on conflicts and on actions being taken
- More awareness in schools and the general public
- In schools teachers should address these issues as part of the curriculum
- Helping people in communities get more involved
- Youth in schools doing projects to get connected with other countries
- People from wealthier countries should re-prioritize so that more money can be spent on helping other, instead of personal gain
- No physical intervention to stop wars but should support the people trying to make peace within the country by providing opportunities for discussion and negotiation of fighting parties

Team two

- Stop selling arms
- Continue to maintain humanitarian programs and should not expect anything in return
- All assistance should be humanitarian unless military or political intervention is requested. i.e. economic sanctions should be avoided.
- Raising awareness in Canadians by having more international and national roundtables and conferences.
- That Canada stops producing and exporting weapons that will be used in under-developed countries

Team four

- Programs should be created that include both immigrants/refugees/war affected children and Canadian kids so that they can learn from one another, share their culture, history, etc.*
- Summer school to help refugees learn English*
- Find teachers for ESL programs that are devoted to teaching it
- Make information on scholarships more readily available to immigrant and refugee youth.
- Have more support people to help with counseling and social skills
- Make more summer jobs available to refugees and remove the barriers that children are facing in terms of accessing higher education because of lack of immigration papers.*
- There need to be national standards created for all ESL programs
- Have an NGO, funded through government and private sectors, that would provide programs for, and monitor, schools with immigration/refugees/war affected children and ESL programs

* denotes points already brought up by roundtable discussions.

Team five

- Create more programs for war affected children: therapy learning programs*
- More finance should go to the mental health of war affected children *
- Family reunification should also be considered and the process be speeded up *
- Faster conversion of diplomas and qualifications to help get jobs faster *
- Summer school to help refugees learn English and French and Spanish*
- Promote health of individuals in war zones *
- Intervene to stop wars * (some objections)
- Do not allow child soldiers under 20 *
- Ban land mines i.e. sign Ottawa treaty

Team Seven

- Find a way to encourage the UN to enforce the human rights treaties especially the convention on the rights of the child.
- Raise awareness within Canada among young people about different wars occurring in the world
- Encourage cooperation between federal minister of immigration and the provincial ministers of education in dealing with refugee children. i.e. programs in schools.
- Stop selling/buying weapons to/from countries at war. (strongly)

Team Six

- Educate children in schools about the plights of refugees, programs after school for Canadian students to learn about refugee children.*
- Create more programs for war affected children: therapy, learning programs.*
- Make more jobs available to refugees and remove barriers that children are facing in terms of accessing higher education because of lack of immigration papers. *
- Canadian government can increase educational programs like ESL*
- Programs should be created that include both immigrants/refugees/war affected children and Canadian kids so that they can learn from one another, share their culture, history.*

Group Points

- More interviews with people affected with war rather than pop stars, etc. Not only about war but about what's being done to stop the war (Not all the bad stuff, but the good stuff, too)
- Youth organization to help sponsor other children around the world (Youth version of World Vision)
- Concentrate on post-war affects on children as well as the war itself. i.e. famine, disease, etc.
- After school programs rather than special schools for refugees. (some objections)
- Activities to help war affected / refugee / immigrant students interact with other students.
- Encourage groups like Amnesty International and ask countries to release students being held because they are not a part of the war

* denotes points already brought up by roundtable discussions.

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Canadian Youth Delegation to the International Conference

Heading into Winnipeg, the 50 youth from Canada attending The National Forum in Gimli were divided into two groups, one called the Communications (Media, Outreach) team, and the other the Canadian Youth Delegation. (The report of activities of the Communications group follows the Canadian delegation activities.)

The Canadian Youth Delegation focussed on working with the International Youth to prepare for and attend the Experts Meeting and the Ministerial Meeting.

At this point the program became more formal and more intense for the youth, with less youth-led activities, and more focus on learning what the adult meetings would look like and what the role of youth would be in those meetings. Gail Cockburn and Susan Fountain took over the lead on the Youth Delegation program, with Students Commission focussed on looking after National Forum youth, in the Canadian delegation, as well as the Communications (Media and Outreach) youth. Linda Dale continued to lead the international youth, although with a small team and many responsibilities, particularly the video, pulling her in many directions, the Students Commission took on added responsibilities, including managing the unforeseen inundation and politics of media requests, the logistics arrangements for all (Canadian and international) delegates and providing leadership re logistics for the logistics and security staff (liasion officers).

Security was intense, and the requirement that youth not walk anywhere without a liasion officer accompanying them added to time delays and pressure. Liasion officers were at first overly nervous and insecure about their duties and it took some time to build an efficiently running team.

Susan Fountain was the lead facilitator for the Youth Meeting and created and ran the various activities of the day, while Kim Rebenchuk and Hilary Holmes provided content advice and worked with the youth on their various inputs to the conference.

After an official opening with the Hon. Ministers Lloyd Axworthy (Foreign Affairs and International Trade) and Maria Minna (International Co-operation) and the media, the youth delegates settled down to work in the formal Hotel Fort Garry setting.

Together with the international youth, they self-selected into various roles, which included Media Spokespersons, Keynote Speakers, Workshop Speakers, Drafting Teams for Experts and Ministerial Meeting statements on behalf of youth, Video Team, Movement Presentation Team. Many long hours were spent as youth processed content from the day's discussions and prepared for their roles.

Highlights:
Communications Youth and Youth Delegates met with Olara Otunnu, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, and he promised his support for their idea of creating an international network of youth — a youth-driven organization — to deal with the issues of war-affected children.

During the next days, the 9 conference themes of the Experts Meeting and the 7 caucus issues were presented and delegates did "walkrounds" on each topic, focussing on the same framework of analysis asked to the Experts: What's Working, What's Not Working, Recommendations, and as an extra What Youth Can Do. Discussions refined the "walkaround" notes and ideas into presentations, workshop presentations, speeches and media briefings. The Youth Spokespersons gave two full media briefings, presenting statements, then answering questions from the media for about one-half hour. Throughout the event, individual and group interviews were scheduled for many of the delegates, with the media spokes team helping to support other delegates in their interviews.

At the Opening of the Experts Meeting, two youth speakers gave a highlight presentation of youth concerns and issues and the Movement Team opened with a dramatic presentation. Youth delegates attended all of the workshops, and in some functioned as speakers, resource people and co-chairs.

At the Ministerial Meeting, youth again had Opening Speaking Roles, plus speaking roles in several workshops, and again were full delegates for the workshops. The video created by the youth was shown. Youth spoke powerfully to the Ministerial Meeting to close the Conference.

Media coverage was intense, but dealing with it and preparing youth for it required extensive time and resources, distracting from the programming. Major interviews were given by youth, not only during the two full press briefings they gave, but also to the Globe and Mail, Toronto Star, all Winnipeg papers, BBC, Radio Netherlands, several CBC radio and TV programs (English, French, Sasha Petrocic, Newsworld)... and more.

Maria Minna, Canadian Minister for International Co-operation, dropped in several times informally to join the youth discussions and promised her support for the networking efforts of the youth and ongoing projects which they create.
Graça Machel, one of the world's foremost advocates of children's rights, in her addresses to the formal meetings, several times spoke directly to the youth about the significance of their participation. Afterwards, she informally scrummed and chatted with them.

Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), came to breakfast with the youth delegates for an informal discussion.

Sarah Stevenson, Canadian Program Manager for Save the Children Canada came and spoke about the opportunity for youth to become involved in the 2001 UNGAS (2001 United Nations General Assembly Special Session UNGAS) for followup to the World Summit for Children.

Youth Delegate Recommendations from the Youth Meeting of the International Conference on War-Affected Children

The Role of Youth in Conflict Situations and Peace Building

What is working?

- YMCA/CIDA is working
- Youth are working very hard to let their voices be heard - we are interested in knowing about the conflicts and we are ready to jump up with solutions
- Palestinian youth are still in the camps and didn't forget their issue and the right of return
- Youth are planning, executing and taking role as neutral party to manage, resolve conflict
- Youth have reached their own place to say a word on peace in Colombia
- Youth from segregated communities brought together in Northern Ireland through cross-community organizations.
- Grassroots conflict resolution, interfaith and interethnic, dialogue and workshops
- Doing programs and workshops through churches
- Peace building through creativity: art, dance, music etc.
- Awareness programs

What isn't working?

- The ideas of youth are not being considered. So, the role of youth is not there.
- Youth still don't have enough to say.
- Youth are not taken seriously by government.
- Media is having a very negative effect on our people and their culture. People become desensitized and stereotypes are portrayed.

What actions can youth take?

- Youth should think as one and strive together to achieve our common goal. Together and only together we can make a difference.
- Youth can self –organize in associations and foras to try to achieve common goals of peace.
- Youth must have the courage to say NO to being used by authorities in fighting.
- Refusing (categorically) the abuses.
- Take action and be given more chances to help in peace building.
- Youth should become actively involved (take interest) in peace building projects.
- Youth should be active and cooperative for their bright future.
- Form peace initiative groups.
- Become leaders and autonomous youth people in order to say stop the war.
- The fact that we are youth and full of energy can be used to send us to spread the word and raise awareness .
- Ask questions, wait for us to answer, and ensure that adults (with authority) are listening.
- Hold regular group discussion among youth.
- Help organizations like Human Rights International and Amnesty International.
- Encourage peers to join in the causes and help!
- Try to get as many people as possible to help youth organizations and support us.
- Civil disobedience to help (not solve) and raise awareness.
- Talk about our problems without fighting to make the world to hear our voice.
- First of all remove conflicts amongst one another, also teach discipline to one another.
- We can take actions on human rights that people have to be treated equally everywhere.
- Countries and regions need to have accurate and positive forms of media that are strongly influenced by youth.

How Can International Humanitarian Law and the Convention on the Rights of the Child be Used for Protection and Prevention?

Recommendations

- Awareness and knowledge about the articles contained within the *Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)*
- Make videos on the CRC and show to the public
- Youth Commission to participate in implementation of Convention
- Children's Parliament
- Young People's Media
- Young People movement (exchange program, raising different issues)
- Children's rights should be taught in schools
- Stronger penalties, enforcement and monitoring of Convention
- Global March against child labour
- Sign the international statute on the International Criminal Court (War Crimes, etc.)
- More co-operation between the NGOs and Governments
- Spend more money in prevention than in hockey and entertainment
- A version of the convention that is easy for youth to read (a summary)
- Educate parents and educators who work with children about the Convention, so as to pass it on to their children and youth
- Government should make programs to help educate youth about Convention
- Make sure the rights of the child are respected and their interests prevail over any other
- Co-operation between local and international NGOs
- Renewal of Convention every couple months for each country (eg. 6 months)
- Encourage the signing of the optional protocol on Convention on the Rights of the Child

What is working?

- Using the Convention as a teaching aid to children
- Working on children's parliament
- Some countries are raising awareness

What isn't working?

- Knowledge about the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*
- No punishment for violations on the Convention
- No implementation or enforcement of Convention
- Children under the age of 18 working
- International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and CRC are not respected by armed groups involved in the conflict
- There is no strong support from the government in CRC advocacy and monitoring mechanisms
- CRC does not raise awareness in country
- Poor countries in debt cannot afford to implement the CRC

What Can Youth Do?

- Use the media to their advantage - a youth media that can be used to promote CRC
- Petition and write letters to the government
- Show interest in rights
- Help the government aid children affected by war
- Invite other youth to be involved
- Be personally committed to working with adults
- Empower youth organizations
- Join groups which promote awareness of Convention

Questions?

How do you protect the Palestinian children from the Israeli Soldiers? (Hostilities between Palestinians and Israelis.) Palestine cannot sign because they have no government.

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Resolutions/Recommendations

- Refugee camps: laws and rights for the refugees. Qualified personnel and background checks. Media rules asking for the permission of the refugees BEFORE they film. Tighter security. Providing basic necessities within the camp so families don't have to split up and transfers of refugees are avoided. Good food , conditions of the camp.
- Anyone responsible for the violation of the rights of children should be brought to justice internationally.
- Sanctions (not economic, possible political)*
- Swift and precise punishments
- Listening to the people in the situation, not just the government; assistance only when requested; creating communication channels/mediators (Liberia) N.B. there is a line where the situation is too severe and intervention should be conditional (no line determined).
- The UN should enforce the convention of the rights of the child; research every two years into the situation of the country; consequences to follow.
- **The five permanent members of the Security Council should have to ratify all international law or else lose their power/status on the Security Council, because of their leadership/role model position.**
- People in leadership roles should take it more seriously and be trained to carry out the commitments they are responsible for. Incompetent government should be dealt with by means of a referendum?
- Workshops and education to explain what is happening in war affected countries (theatre).
- International organization with posts all over the world that goes to people and asks them what the important issues are and help their voices be heard.

Accountability Mechanisms for War-Affected Children

What's Working

- Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- Non-Government organizations and special projects
- Human rights watch
- UN?
- Amnesty International

What is not working

- Ministries'/government's promises/commitments
- Laws exist in many nations, yet the executors of the law and justice system do not enforce them (child soldiers)
- Governments who sign the treaties are not sincere
- Amnesty for War Lords, leaders, and criminals
- When refugee camps are set up, the administration is not very strong, so what doesn't work is the lack of laws in the camps; they are supposed to be protecting people but they aren't, but no one takes responsibility for this

There is lots of talk and discussion about this but not enough action!

What youth can do?

- Ask questions, get informed
- More events, conferences, round tables, campaigns, awareness raising on all levels, asking for implementation of laws and respect.
- Protests, demonstrations, civil disobedience, pressure government to have your voice heard

Protection for Children During Conflicts

What is working?

- NGO initiatives.
- Nothing is being done.
- Laws and regulations on the papers are being executed.
- Trauma centres are working during the conflict in Northern Ireland.
- The youth empowerment in Sri Lanka will illegally steal food to help the people.
- Organisations give legal support to the people like CIDA support.
- Between the youth there is more help in Burundi.
- They have associations among themselves because the adult associations don't understand them.

What is not working?

- Alarm for air danger does not exist or is not on time.
- UNRWA isn't receiving enough funding to provide quality education to refugees.
- We're not listening to children enough.
- UN should do more to prevent the issue of landmines.
- Medical care and education do not work.
- No security for children and women.
- No signs telling the danger of land mines for children and people in land mine areas in Bosnia.
- Not always enough food and services in Colombia.
- In Sri Lanka, there is no support for children.
- Only after the conflict there is support.
  The food that is distributed is usually given to big villages, so the people that really need the food (the villagers) don't get it. The humanitarian resources are very badly distributed.

Recommendations/key actions

- The UN should establish care-centres for children in order to protect them against danger.
- Psychological counselling for children affected by war provided by communities (NGO and other organisations).
- International commitment to ensure children are not turned into soldiers.
- Stop sanctions and find a better way to resolve conflict.
- More support to FAWE.
- Governments should fund healing programs for children.
- International pressures to allow medical support in conflict areas.
- Provide medication and educational programs for children.
- Stop producing landmines.
- Declare safety zones by governments, the UNHCR and the rebels for civilians.
- The money spent on ammunition should be spent on violent prevention and education.
- Hospitals, religious institutions, playgrounds and schools should be safety zones.
- Act on the recommendations.
- Stop corruption and embezzlements.
- UN and concerned governments to intervene where children's rights are violated without security council decisions.
- Encourage youth intervention in conflicts.
- Visit the countries touched by war.
- Organise intervention before a conflict occurs.
- The UN international community and other organisations should pay more attention to African children.
- We should protect the whole family and not only the child.
- Easier access into Canada for child refugees and immigrants.
- Children have the right to return home.

What actions can youth take?

- The youth can take actions to change the systems of schools and the systems of their lives.
- Raise awareness on the problem to make it visible in all levels in the society and call for action to protect and integrate the child victims.
- Sensitivity programs through media counselling workshops to keep youth together and have awareness of what is happening.
- By forming children's safety clubs and train them to protect their peers.
- Pressuring government and the UN.
- Raise money so we can sponsor more refugees to Canada.
- To build safe shelters.
- Petition to the government/UN to more strictly implement its policies regarding the protection of the children in countries in conflict and encourage consequences in regard of the breaking of the policy.
- Design programs to assist disabled children.
- Youth are helpless therefore adults should double up their efforts.

Effective Peace Building Strategies

What is not working?

- Peace strategies in Ethiopia do not work, for example, US taking sides and not supported internationally.
- Corruption in governmental organizations lead to waste of money originally assigned for peace building projects.
- Too many groups exist on the planet, so there are a lot of differences and opinions which decelerates the peace process.
- Some peace processes are not supported by some governments, for example, Camp David.

What is working?

- Aid Helpers.
- Negotiation between government leaders.
- Many are fed up of wars.
- More effort to break down borders, former enemies are now near allies.
- Youth peace building initiatives.

Recommendations/Key actions

- The involvement of eminent personalities such as actors, politicians, sports stars in awareness programs and companies.
- Government organizations which promote youth taking an active role in teaching children general education.
- Everyone needs to follow international laws.
- Always find somewhere to discuss before using weapons.

What Actions Can Youth Take

- Create a youth network that will work with others youth in war countries.
- Young people need to be heard – need help from UN and media exposure.
- Youth should always speak with adults if the opportunity arises.
- Promote patriotism, discourage nationalism.
- Make some peace process about some refugee issue.
- Encourage education about both sides of the issue, give children both sides of the story, so that children don't grow up hearing only the opinions of often biased adults.
- There should always be impartial media coverage.
- Include peace education in school curriculum.
- Land acquired justly since and held for a substantial amount of years should rightly belong to the nation that is currently inhabiting it.

The Challenge of Conflict Prevention

What is not working

- Democratic process (in some countries governments elect who the leader is, not the people); no universal definition of democracy
- Poverty alleviation
- Peace talks and negotiations
- UN resolutions for preventing conflicts
- Resolutions often increase/aggravate conflicts because more issues are born to invite it.
-

What actions can youth take

- Aid in raising public awareness of the issues so that they are known before violence takes place (i.e. in schools)
- Attend and press for more forums/conferences to share ideas with each other and governmental officials
- Youth should be more aware and involved in political issues

Recommendations

- Impose political and military sanctions (not ones that will affect civilians)
- Elections should be monitored/facilitated by impartial NGOs
- Conflicts should be brought before a jury (i.e. International Court) before violence breaks out. (Rome statute)
- Youth should be represented in international summits
- An organisation should be created to monitor conflicts so that preventive measures can be taken before it is too late
- Countries should be held more strictly to recommendations/treaties/etc
- The UN should have more power to intervene in conflict situations (before and during)
- Youth should be included in the mediation process (as mediators) in conflict situations
- More emphasis should be placed on the awareness of the effect of wars world wide
- Land/border expansions should require UN approval so as to reduce the number of conflicts caused by land disputes
- More dialogues at National levels (not regional) involving all aspects of the communities to raise awareness
- Encourage cultural activities that promote peace
- More international agreements in regards to restrictions and control of weapons and implements of destruction

The Media, Children and Conflict

What is working

- Information is being made available via the internet to the international community about the violation of human rights
- More attention is being given to children's issues and concerns.
- People are becoming more concerned about issues.
- There are some media who are relaying the important issues and information (i.e. the Arabic Media).

What is not working

- Sensationalism (exaggerating the issues)
- The media does not always disclose all the facts due to political agendas, and monetary support.
- Child to child media programs are rare.
- There is no international organization to uphold and monitor media standards.
- Media is too particular with which stories they will report or not report and the details therein.

What actions youth can take

- Letters to editors, to radio stations (i.e. talk radio), television stations, etc. to make the media know that we want to hear about these issues!
- Youth should endeavour to make the issues known in their own country and around the world (i.e. through youth media organizations)

Encourage major media organizations to have a youth reporter/youth voice represented in their reporting.

Recommendations

- Media content should be regulated to ensure that international issues are more likely to be reported.
- Media led by youth should be created and supported in conflict situations and that information should be broadcast throughout the world.
- Media should remain impartial in reporting on issues.
- Information should be readily available to all citizens of countries so that they are aware of what is going on in their nation.
- Governments should not be allowed to censor the media.
- Reports on conflicts should be better researched and not far-fetched.
- The media should not give out information that may endanger the security or safety of youth; the safety of the youth needs to come first, not the stories.
- Less restrictions should be placed on media reporting about youth issues in war affected countries.
- More attention should be placed on children in war-affected countries.

Research, Reporting and Follow-Up to Children's Rights Violations

What is working
- Researchers are doing their jobs (it's the research that isn't)
- Awareness of children's rights

What isn't working
- No implementation of solutions and research reports or follow-ups
- Not enough prosecution of violators
- Research can be politically biased
- Too much talk, not enough action

Recommendations
- People should not stop youth from receiving education
- Stricter consequences for violators of children's rights
- More awareness among the public
- Children's rights should be taken more seriously by leaders
- Follow-ups should be more frequent (i.e. 2 years maximum) and should not be done by local officials but by impartial NGOs
- UN requires more power to reprimand and prosecute violators and enforce recommendations

Youth opinions should be considered in a higher regard by the UN (Youth are often more candid and impartial concerning the issues)

What actions youth can take
- Youth media to monitor Children's Rights
- More youth involvement in research
- More conferences and youth input to encourage action
- Youth should have more input into what their rights should be
- Youth should be included in the resolution of cases involving children's rights violation
- More awareness of updates to treaties regarding children's rights, so that governments can be confronted when violations occur
- Invite youth from different backgrounds to be involved in decision making processes
- Youth should become active advocates of children's rights

The Military, Armed Groups and Children's Rights

What is working

- Nothing because non governmental armed groups don't sign the treaties. We live in an era that has a lot of options for youth rather than military.

What isn't working?

- Most people are ignorant, innocent and have nothing good to do in their lives, and therefore join the military for certain satisfaction.
- There is no security for children.
- The international law only works in the powerful countries.
- The armed groups have no respect for the children rights and there is no respect for their opinions.
- Justice.
- Education of armed men on humanitarian laws.
- Punishment of violators of children rights.

Recommendations

- That both armed forces should meet somewhere far from children.
- Children should have the right to speak out about their rights.
- Increased educational standards (nationally and internationally) because most people who engage in armed conflicts are illiterate.
- In Columbia, you have no right to speak about these issues. If you speak too much, you or your family members will immediately be kidnapped, tortured and killed: **security**.
- Educate children so that they are more aware of what their rights are, and what they can do to ensure that they are upheld.
- Military organizations should not be permitted to target youth for enlistment.
- In Sierra Leone civilians have no rights to speak about their resources like gold, diamonds, mining, etc. which had been sold to our countries to enrich themselves.
- Militaries should also be trained in human rights. They shouldn't kill doctors or rob houses, kill children or innocent people.
- Whoever violates these rules should be punished.
- Arms should be sold only to recognized governments for defence purposes. Ammunition should be sold in emergency situations.
- U.N. intervention in areas where child abuse is reported.
- No alcohol should be allowed in military bases so that if anything happens it can't be blamed on alcohol.
- Promote the concept of eminent person groups.

What actions can youth take?

Form pressure groups. Protect the children. Form organizations that promote peace. Open the eyes of youth by inviting them to do activities that they enjoy, rather than enrolling them in the military.

Small Arms

Small arms and light weapons: handguns, grenades, rocket propelled grenades, assault rifles, landmines, personal weapons, and weapons that can be carried by one or two persons, or small animals.

What's Working

- Does Canada currently sell small arms to countries in conflict or countries with potential conflict situations?
- Arms embargoes in conflict countries by the UN

What Isn't Working

- There are still small arms being sold around the world, and it doesn't matter to arms dealers which country they are selling to
- Tracking mechanisms to track small arms sales, especially amongst the arms producers are not working as well as registry
- Disarmament processes do not work because more arms come into the country (arms are imported then sold to the disarmament teams)
- Moralizing about small arms is not working

Recommendations

- Arms being produced should be registered and tracked in order to ensure they are going to their proper destinations
- Arms recovered via disarmament processes should be destroyed (i.e. Ireland, Liberia)
- Ban arms sales to governments who do not operate within human rights standards
- Small arms should be designed to be more difficult to use so as to make it more difficult for children to use them. (i.e. more safety devices)
- Arms producers should be limited in the quantity of arms they can produce per annum
- Limitations should be placed on governments to limit the number of small arms they can stockpile
- UN Experts should be sent to different governments to set up and monitor programs for disarmament and small arms control
- Small arms trade should be made non-profitable so as to discourage promiscuous arms sales
- We should stop talking out of both sides of our mouths; we cannot support conflict by selling arms to them and support peace at the same time. (stop being hypocritical)
- Small arms should be used to protect life and property and not for exploitation and human rights violations
- Third party organizations to monitor/initiate/facilitate small arms trade
- There should be straight and clear legislation in regards to the small arms trade
- Small arms should remain out of civilian hands, and remain within the hands of legitimate state organizations for security purposes
- These recommendations should not just be for talking, but for action
- Remain impartial to conflict situations in order to achieve justice and peace for resolving the conflict
- Small arms should be banned completely, a world without guns should be our dream

What Youth Can Do

- Organize action against small arms (violence, productions, sales, etc)
- Youth should take action (letters, boycotts, etc) against companies that produce/promote weapons and weapon sales to war affected countries
- Youth should not join armed groups but should rather become conscientious objectors in both state armies as well as rebel groups. Refuse to become soldiers.

Stop violence, racism and teach love and be an example to adults if they cannot be positive examples to us.

Child Soldiers

What is working

- Nothing working in Sierra Leone, Uganda
- There are more options for youth to keep busy

What is not working

- No proper teatment at hospitals
- Injured are sent back into battle
- Youth are given drugs to make them strong and more courageous
- Women are used as sex slaves for the military
- Not only young men, but young girls also go to battle
- In the history of Uganda, rebels often started the recruitment of young children
- Differences in what the government says and what they actually practice
- No international law to cover guerrilla fighters, only for government (optional protocol for the CRC)
- Countries know about problems but never do anything
- Propaganda is used to encourage youth to volunteer for the armies
- Forced youth service (abductions)
- Joining the army is a means of survival
- Hypocrisy amongst government (they won't use their own children, but won't hesitate to use other people's)
- No reintegration programs in place for youth returning from wars
- International law not being practiced in third world countries, possibly due to poverty
- Youth are being used in all armed groups (government, rebel, civil militia)
- Children have no education, recreation or toys to play with to keep busy and have little choice but to join the army

Recommendations

- The UN should use the law in the right place at the right time. (Enforced)
- Educate children so they are not as easily mislead
- Employment available for child soldiers so that they are not tempted to return to war
- Provisions for education and training for child soldiers returning from war
- The country that forced the children to go to war, should create a program for the men and women of their country. For example: all of the men are obliged for two years of service in the military and they must be at least 21 years of age. During those years those men have the right to receive education, (military, social, political, etc) Only the women who want to go there can go, they cannot be forced to go.
- People that use children as soldiers should be tried under international laws
- Form an organized group for youth to observe/monitor/propose solutions to problems within their countries
- Pressure should be placed on the countries that support rebel factions within other countries, as well as people who side with rebels, and their families
- Punishment again people who perform war crimes against children
- Rebel leaders should not be a part of the government since they can provide the rebels with government support. (Sierra Leone). Two faced government officials
- Media needs to highlight issues in war-affected areas; there should be equal exposure of conflicts so that one conflict is not represented more. Unbiased media is needed, more laws and regulations for the media to abide by
- Ask UN to create a special commission to monitor that no child be recruited as a soldier, and if needed impose sanctions upon the perpetrator.
- Every child should have a proper birth certificate

What youth can do

- Youth doesn't need to wait for the government, lead the way and pressure government to take action
- Young people organizing themselves to take action, create networks for youth, a medium for contact
- Be willing to learn; make the learning process more attractive to young people.
- International community should support youth for education by aiding financially
- A program for community awareness, creation in times of use of child soldiers
- Every child should be aware of what their rights are (through school)
- Distribute/create posters/leaflets so that children can understand their own rights (in different languages). Every child should have a copy of their rights in their own.

Landmines

What is working

- Ottawa Convention (122 have signed, 45 of which have ratified)
- Awareness
- De-mining operations
- Using celebrities to draw attention to the issue

What is not working

- Major nations have yet to sign the Ottawa Convention, including the U.S., China, Russia, etc.
- Underdeveloped nations aren't implementing the treaty and neither are developed nations.
- The Ottawa Convention is not working at its fullest potential.
- The usage and production of landmines continues, especially in countries of war.
- Landmines are still sold and available at cheap prices.
- Landmines are supposed to be manufactured with enough metal and brightly coloured materials so that they can be detected easily.

Recommendations

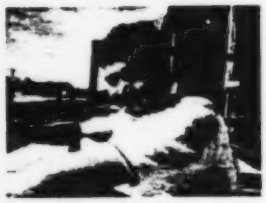
- Turn words into action.
- Peace negotiations should be encouraged.
- Put in place recommendations already made.
- Use portions of the military's budget and manpower for de-mining.
- Impose tariffs on the production and trading of landmines.
- Make countries and armed groups and all the parties that planted and manufactured the land mines pay for de-mining and medical expenses.
- Pressure the US to sign and ratify the Ottawa Convention.
- Create awareness in local communities on the harm and trauma of landmines.
- Governments need to know the price difference between buying landmines and the de-mining prices ($3:$300-1000).
- The UN should pass a resolution recommending the ban of landmines.
- Rehabilitation for landmine victims needs to be provided.
- Non-government organizations should be encouraged to apply political pressure to restrict the trade of landmines.
- Education should be provided in regions affected by landmines to educate youth how to avoid and recognise landmines.
- Produce all landmines with enough metal and bright colours so they can be detected more easily.

What Actions can Youth Take

Landmines are being produced and planted at this very moment. We, the youth, may take action by creating awareness in the following areas:

- Pressuring the U.S. and all other non-signatories to sign and ratify the Ottawa treaty.
- Train youth to hold conferences and workshops in their own communities on the issue of land mines and their devastating effects.
- Write letters to manufacturers of landmines to encourage them to increase the metallic content of the land mines, making them easier to detect.
- Write letters to governments of countries where there are companies that produce landmines, encouraging the governments to impose a tariff on landmines to make them less appealing to warring nations.

Adolescents



What is working?

- Workshops about humanitarian laws and children rights.
- Counselling programs to let them be aware of the problems.
- Many wish to pressure to be able to continue their education.

What is not working?

- Adolescents are not listened to, they are killed.
- People are not taking in account the adolescents in decision making processes.
- They are not the only victims of the conflict, but also pressured to participate directly in the armed conflict.
- Taking youth seriously.
- They have been recruited for the armed groups.
- They are distracted by "hippy" things => distracted.

What Actions Can Youth Take

- They must protest in order to have support.
- Tell any governmental groups in their country any information concerning the places of landmines and the groups that mislead.
- Discourage ignorance that is considered as 'cool' in the world today.
- Encourage knowledge that should be 'cool' to us.
- Programs to disengage youth people from armed groups.
- Government & UN agencies should show more respect for youth contribution to world issues especially in conflict prevention and resolution.
- Dialogues should occur between adolescents so as to learn form one and another.
- Discourage stereotypes especially between the adolescents of conflicting nations (ex. opposing sides of youth should talk with each other).

Support girls education because when you educate a girl you educate the nation.

Recommendations/Key actions

- There should be a system of support created for war affected adolescents whom are burdened with the responsibility of their household sponsored by international NGO's – such as programs linking those with the same problem and financial aid and job opportunities.
- That way they are able to sustain the fundamental needs of their families.
- There should also be continuous education and child-care for younger siblings so that they can work and attend school.
- A more thorough education should be available to them so that they won't be vulnerable to misleading promises.
- Have a major position vs. the life despite the shortage – to be away from mode and consumption.
- Be aware of the country's situation in which we live and the responsibilities for the future generations.
- Establish some organizations around the world to support adolescents in the conflicts.
- Produce a resolution by the UN to protect adolescent civilians among the wars and the conflicts.
- There should be opportunities for education, jobs and health.
- Educate them so that they can comprehend their role in the protection of their lives.
- Youth must be the key of the future.

What is working

- Programs that help women continue their education (Lebanon)
- Improved training for people who are gathering information in that particular subject

What is not working

- Not involving woman in government systems
- No balance between males and females in society, and especially in government positions and decision-making positions.
- In some countries there is no sex education for females, females are sometimes rejected from their own communities, and in a lot of cultures, females are considered weaker than males.

Gender and Conflict

Recommendations

- Protect girls in particular from sexual abuse during conflict by putting into place codes, and very severe laws and sanctions punishing sexual violators.
- Walk the talk.
- Implement more projects based on education, especially for the females.
- Provide education and rehabilitation for sex and child abuse.
- STOP forced prostitution (bringing girls for sexual purposes) in conflict areas. (ex. for soldiers)
- Educate males about females and that both of them have equal rights. (especially in religious countries)
- Educate people about other religions and cultures to eliminate prejudice and discrimination (e.g prejudice against different sexual orientations).

What actions can youth take

- Youth can campaign for women's rights in the world (e.g rights to equality and education).
- Young people should start practicing equality among themselves in order for them to pass the message along, so that the next generation will follow in our steps.
- Youth can be involved in rehabilitation activities.
- Youth should inspire other youth to accomplish what we have accomplished.
- Youth can pressure the UN to take action against human rights violations in Islamic and other religious countries where the interpretation of religion violates the rights of citizens.

Investigacion Reporte y Seguimientos en la Violación de los Derechos de los Niños

El tener la oportunidad de compartir nuestras experiencias nos brinda la posibilidad de encontrar alguien con quien contar, crea en nuestra mente una esperanza en el futuro y nos da al menos la satisfacción de que fuimos escuchados .

Es dificil guardar el dolor pero es peor ignorar que los demás están sufriendo, es por esto que debemos hacer respetar nuestra integridad como personas y velar por la de los demás; llegar a la raiz del problema que nos está afectando y encontrar soluciones mediante una participación y colaboración directa. Sencollamente debemos educarnos.

Tal vez muy pocas sabemos lo que se siente el tener que dejar nueastro espacio, el sentir el dolor que produce la soledad y la falta de esperanza en la vida, el temor que nos crea tan solo hablar porque sencillamente no podemos siquiera afrontar nuestro pensamientos. Se necesita corage para alcanzar lo que anhelamos pero muchas veces el miedo es mas fuerte.

Le injusticia no tiene que ser un secreto, debe de ser una realidad que se tiene que combatir con la verdad, ya que debemos ser conscientes que estamos perdiendo el futuro del mundo por una guerra que solo lleva a destrucción. Debemos denunciar la barbarie que realmente se vive para asi tomar parte activa en fuertes y necesarias soluciones.

Solo quiero decir que necesitamos actos directos de paz, no documentos y acuerdos que tan solo extenden el conflicto y nos lleva a ocultar la realidad que vivimos dia a dia, dejándonos solas y sin apoyo fuerte para salir adelante.

Los medios en el conflicto juegan un role muy importante pues nos actualizan de la situacion que estámos viviendo y si en ellos no encontramos imparcialidad en la información , nuestras acciones no van a ser precisas . No necesitamos imagenes que venden historias necesitamos investigaciones reales, reportes profesionales y un seguimiento consciente en la violacion de los derechos de los ninos.

LANNY JIMENEZ
COLOMBIA/CANADA

Refugees and Internally Displaced Children

What is working

- Providing refugee camps. UNRWA provides many services in the refugee camps in Palestine.
- Programs supporting refugees and displaced people.
- Training and rehabilitation programs through centres for women and youth.
- NGOs helping displaced people.

What isn't working

5. There is no protection for kids. They are taken off their land and sent to cities where they are exposed to danger.
6. UN resolutions are not applied (For example UN resolution 194).
7. No or little access to basic needs.

- In conflict situations, records are not kept. This means that people are lost. Governments do not help.
- It's too long of a procedure to get official papers allowing them to attend school.

8. Some refugees do not have the refugee status so they do not know where to go. The UN decisions are not being applied.

- **No access to basic needs.**

What actions can youth take

- Youth should be empowered to channel the international resources to help the war victims.
- Voluntary youth programs such as education, awareness, and reunification building. Help connect displaced people by volunteering for organizations. This can also save money.
- Find the market for the products made by refugees.

Train the youth to work with the refugee children.

Recommendations

- UN and other NGOs should treat all refugees around the world on equal basis.
- Start treatment for children such as psychological rehabilitation.
- Broadcasting networks should give out names of people staying in certain areas taken by surveys to help family members locate them.
- Provide employment opportunities.
- To give social help and free education.
- Decrease prices of food.
- Have a UN funded organization to help and work with internally displaced people. NGO should start sustainable projects (enough time) to help children integrate in the society and to not get involved in conflicts.
- Not only help the outside refugees.
- We should also give a lending hand to the internal refugees.
- Humanitarian assistance should send the right commodities.
- UN agencies and NGO should have programs to preserve the culture of the community they are serving.
- Programs to help internal refugees to go back home.

Conflict and HIV/AIDS

The uprising of conflict has led to the destruction of many lives and properties. Children are the most vulnerable in conflicts and they innocently suffer the atrocities of violent conflicts and war.

In Liberia, for example, as well as in Sierra Leone, children have suffered the dangers of civil wars and conflicts. They suffered starvation, rape, lack of medication, displaced and refugee lives; some were left homeless, orphans and early teenage parents. During conflict, people develop and become infected with diseases as a result of rapes, hunger, lack of shelters, lack of medication, and lack of sanitation. The lack of sex education, protection, medication, and the lack of understanding have led to the epidemic of the AIDS virus in Third World countries.

What is working

- International co-operation on finding a medication. A lot of awareness by the media.

What is not working

- Finding a medication?
- No acknowledgement on the cause from soldiers.
- Not much attention given.
- Education in the army.
- More awareness to everyone around the world.
- Not enough funding.
- Lack of proper sanitation.
- Not everyone has access to condoms.
- Misinformation about the disease (HIV).
- No international law to punish people re prostitution

Action youth can take

- Do workshops in schools by spreading the issue with youth organizations.
- Create awareness tools like videos and spread it around to schools to make sure the youth are aware
- Alcohol /sex films should be prohibited to the forces and government, should stop these good
- Discourage immorality (early sex education from grade 6)

Recommendations

Having identified and discussed the effects of conflicts, we recommend that:

- there should be conflict awareness on the community, national, regional and international level
- there should be immediate intervention by peacekeeping forces (community, national, regional, and international peacekeepers)
- avoiding the involvement of children in violent conflicts and war
- protection of children during conflict
- bringing children out of the conflict zone and settling them in refugee camps during conflicts
- ban the use of sophisticated weapons that pose much more danger in conflicts and war
- both warlords and facilitator of wars should be brought to justice
- when we sense a looming conflict, a neutral third party should bring the two potentially conflicting parties together to discuss a peaceful resolution

Having discussed the issue of HIV/AIDS, we recommend that:

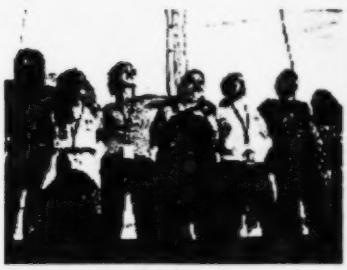
- (important) Start informing sex education as earliest as possible
- fight against bordello, polygamy
- More education for soldiers and strict law to control their actions.
- To have an international policy for each control of using prevention articles and services.
- AIDS TEST COMPULSORY FOR EVERYONE AND MAKE SURE THERE IS NO GOVERNMENT IN THIS AND NO COST
- Sex education should be included in all school curriculums of all countries and of all communities as early as possible.
- Free medical attention facilities should be provided for all AIDS patients in all communities.
- Free care centers should be established for all AIDS patients in all communities.
- Free counseling programs should be provided for all AIDS patients.
- Soldiers should be educated on sexually transmissible diseases and should be under a strict law to control their actions.
- Free AIDS tests should be compulsory for everyone in the military and free for willing civilians.

What is working?]

- Counselling (some countries through the centres) also accessing hospitals
- Capacity building on local level
- Community support, volunteerism

What is not working?

- Funding/resources for programs
- No change in attitude (government, community, perpetrators)
- Lack of strategy in approaching the issues
- Finding alternative ways instead of drugs



Trauma And Healing

Recommendations

- International regulations agencies to supervise health centres
- Open more centres
- More community development and capacity building experts and community
- Bring the subsection school curriculum
- Programs by people with trauma experience!
- Financial support to local programs!!! And over all funding

What action can youth take?

- Creating means for youth to empower each other i.e. forums
- Involving youth in political processes
- Run recovery centres
- Educate themselves

YOUTH KEYNOTE ADDRESS

THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WAR-AFFECTED CHILDREN

Good morning ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests, and fellow youth delegates. This morning, in an effort to demonstrate the sheer diversity of our youth delegation, our speech will consist of both the official languages of the conference and my counterpart, Florian, will be speaking on behalf of the international youth delegates whilst I will speak on behalf of the Canadian. Throughout time, youths have been seen as unequal to their older counterparts, their opinions often ignored or considered inferior. It is unheard of that youth are so respected and their opinions so valued. That is why it is such an honour to be invited to an event of this scale. We, the youth, have played a vital role at this conference, not only through our contributions thus far, but in our presence along side global experts working in the field of child protection. We have set the international stage for other such events to take place and have demonstrated that we are experts in our own right...we know youth because we are youth! Many of the youth delegation comes from war torn countries...we have seen hunger, pain, and suffering. This is not the commercials you see on TV, these are the lives of our delegates, this is what we've had to live with....

Depuis l'age to 11 ans, je vie dans un pays en guerre. Je viens d'avoir maintenant mes 18 ans sans connaitre la paix. Au mois d'octobre, je ne said pas si je vais pleurer ou feter parce pour moi, ca serra ma 7e annee d'instabilite spirituelle, mentalle, et physique. Une periode durant la quelle la peur, la solitude, le frustration, le desespoir se sont empares de moi et l'epanuissement m'est difficille du jour au lendemain. J'ai l'impression que je n'est jamais ete heureux de ma vie du moins jusqu'a present, parce que je me souviens vaguement de mes annees anterieures a la guerre qui ont peut entre etaient magnifique, enfin je ne m'en souviens pas. J'ai eu la chance de ne pas perdre mes parents our l'un des mes freres ou souers.

Mais je ne peux pas oublier mes cousins, mes tentes, mes oncles, mes amis, qui ont ete massacres a coup de machette.

Il est delicat pour moi de vous expliquer et de vous faire comprendre comment c'est difficile. De vivre dans une terruer permanent et quotidienne en se posent toujours la meme question: que-ce qui va m'arriver aujourd'hui? Tandisque d'autres enfants de meme age, dans un autre coin du monde, sepose le question de savoir qu'ils vont metter our chercher sur internet et quand je pense que les adultes qui sont entierement responsable de cette malheureuse situation eux ont connu un belle enfance, ca me depasse plus en plus. Croyez-moi, il est vraiment impossible d'etre optimiste dans ce cas. Vraiment ca depasse l'entendement. Si vous ne pouvez pas assurer une bonne existence a vos enfants, cessez de les mettre au monde.

Youth drink. Youth do drugs. Youth don't respect their elders. They don't think of their future. So what do youth have to contribute to our society? The reality is that youth have been bombarded with such stereotypes for so long that they themselves no longer know the answer. Over the past ten days, since the sixth of September, 75 youth have come together to share stories, ideas, and feelings, and to discuss the issues at hand.

Mais l'experience qu'on vient de vivre durant ces 10 derniers jours est magnifique et devez servir d'exemple meme aux adultes. Vous vous imagines des personnes venant de part le monde encore des jeunes qu'on croyait qui s'interresser peu a la courtoisie et au bonne maniere, c'est la premiere fois qu'ils se voient. Mais dans quelques jours seulement ils parviennent a devenir amis. Ils forment presque une famille, maintenant ils parlent presque la mame langue, parce qu'ils ont les memes idees, ils sont determines plus a jamais a batir ce monde en commencant par faire valoir leurs droits le plus legitimes, car par ailleurs ils n'ont pas demander a naitre. Et on ne peut pas aboutir a nos buts sans votres apuis, nous comptons sur votre conprehension, votre sagesse, et votre sens de responsabilite entant qu'adultes entant que pere et mere.

Nous insistons aussi sur la mise en application des engagements que nous aurons pris. Que ces bonnes idees et ces bonnes recommandations ne restent pas sur les papier; sortons de salles des conferences et concretisons nos engagements par des actes sur le terrian. Je voudrais terminer en remercient une fois de plus le governement canadien et en particulier les deux ministries, Mme. Maria Minna et M. Lloyd Axworthy. Je voudrais aussi remercier tous les autres qui ceux se sont donnes corps et ame dans la reussite de cette conference.

YOUTH CLOSING STATEMENT AT EXPERTS MEETING

Ladies and gentlemen, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to let us voice our ideas and opinions involving war-affected children in this international setting. Being able to work with experts from around the world not only motivated us to make a difference, but also gave us concrete ideas of how to start.

We would like to put our words into action by creating an international organization of youth responsible to support the implementation of the recommendations made here regarding children and youth affected by war. With political and financial support from governments and NGOs, our recommendations would become realities. During this conference we met with Minister Minna who indicated her support for this project. Last night, we met with Mr. Otunnu, who discussed our participation in a movement for the protection of war-affected children. This would include children to children networks, advocacy campaigns, and a youth advisory council that would provide advice and support to his office. We can see that the time has come for co-operation between the youth and adults on the issue of war-affected children.

Let's make it possible for the voices of children to be heard in the global community. This organization could do this through activities such a lobbying, pressuring governments, and running campaignes to adopt better policies concerning children and war. In addition to these tactics, we would also like to use resources that are currently available to create a worldwide network of youth which will be focussed on this issue, and determined to make life better for those who are suffering. Holding discussions and workshops to educate children regarding their rights, advising and facilitating program development, and identifying priorities for research, are some examples of what the youth can do if the opportunity would be given.

Youth support will not only help to implement Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, but will also set an example for other nations to put youth participation into practice. By working together we will be one step closer to war prevention and peace building.

During the past week, we've seen and heard stories from the young victims of war.

We are tired of only being the victims, we want to be the ones who make a difference.

A change must be made. We urge experts and organizations to work with us in making this project become our reality.

YOUTH STATEMENT FOR MINISTERIAL MEETING

Good afternoon, Merhaba, hosh galden, baherben, salut, taato, mire dita, somkorup, fellow delegates.
We would like to welcome you and thank you for this opportunity to participate in this conference. Although some of us now live in peace in Canada, among us we represent war-affected children worldwide. We speak to you as young people with the experience of war. We have lost out homes and our schools. We have been abused, tortured, and raped. We have witnessed brutal murders and have been abducted and separated from out families. Some of us have fought in wars against our own kin.
We also speak to you as young people who want to be involved in building peace in communities. We have many concerns but also many ideas that we would like to share with you.

Based on what we have seen, and are seeing, what we have felt and are feeling, as well as what we have shared with one another, we have come to a consensus that children are the people most affected by war.
During this conference, we have heard a lot of rhetoric about how young people are the leaders of the future. While not dismissing the truth of this statement, we say that we have a crucial role to play in our societies now. Our recommendations to improve our future must be respected and we need to be involved in the planning and implementation in all levels. From this conference, we want to see practical solutions that benefit war-affected children emerge. We wish to see the mere discussions of these issues cease and encourage action to see more and better quality support for war-affected children.

Many of the solutions are already there (for example the Convention on the Rights of the Child), but so far we have not seen any strong and effective actions regarding what has been written. We would like to share with you what we strongly believe to be the main priorities that have been highlighted by us, the young experts in this conference.

Education

Around the world, there are tens of thousands of children who, because of wars, are denied their right to education. Education is the key to preventing conflicts and to rebuilding our lives after conflict. We demand quality education be provided to all children affected by war. In addition to courses offered in national curriculum, education needs to emphasize awareness through teaching the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Self-understanding and development must be motivated through capacity building, leadership training, and the exploration of issues such as women's rights and democracy. This education must be provided both during and after war. Adults also need access to education, especially education that makes them aware of children's rights.

All children need to be encouraged to accept diversity and tolerance. Education is an essential component of peace building. Empowerment must begin at the community level. Long-term conflict prevention begins with social education.

Building Peace

War destroys everything - our schools, our homes, our families, our communities, our jobs, our health and our souls. War destroys our childhood. We need to rebuild all of these things to create healthy communities. On our journey to peace, we need long-term support and assistance.

Beyond simple survival, we need individual, family, and community healing. This means promoting cultural and social activities that teach our communities to work together. As over half of the population of our countries, we are needed to build peace today and to make it last for tomorrow. We are an important part of our communities and want to play a role in making decisions and taking action. We ask government officials, friends, parents, teachers, and other sympathetic adults to help us to learn about and become involved in all political processes - from our neighbourhoods to the United Nations.

To build peace and prevent war, we need long-term commitments that help us to defeat poverty. We want local people to lead the development, but we need access to skills, knowledge and tools to improve the economies of our communities. When people can make a good living and respect all people regardless of their gender, age, or ethnicity, it is less likely that they will go to war. People need to have enough money so that they are not forced to partake in conflicts.

Refugees and Internally Displaced People

During war many people, including women and children, are denied their right to safety. Without refuge, children are likely to be hurt, maimed, killed, or manipulated into joining rebel factions and other groups that destroy their innocence. It is crucial that sanctuary be made available, regardless of expense. Because of war, many children and their families are unable to return to their communities. We demand that the international community take actions to allow all refugees and internally displaced people to safely return home.

For those who feel trapped within refugee camps, it is necessary that they be provided equal and essential basic needs, including satisfactory food rations and sanitary living conditions. All child refugees must be offered free education, as a child's learning process must not be interrupted by displacement.

Refugees need more flexible and efficient assistance in receiving the proper documentation to allow access to aid while they are in the camps and re-integration within their own communities following the conflict.

Leadership roles within the camp should be equally distributed among all, including adolescents. We must be involved in making the decisions and helping to plan programs inside refugee camps.

Tools for Destruction

Preventative measures are needed to protect the rights of children worldwide. In order to protect our children, we must prohibit the production and trading of weapons, including small arms and landmines. The quantity of small arms that a country can export, import, or stockpile is currently unregulated. An independent international organization should be put in place to monitor and facilitate all arms trade, as well as assist countries in establishing internal small arms control. Such an organization should facilitate the ban on arms sale to governments that do not operate within human rights standards. Also, in post-war situations, disarmament processes must be encouraged where small arms can be recovered and destroyed. Destruction of these arms means ensuring that they will never be reused. All companies and nations involved in the production and use of landmines must be put to shame.

Violations Against Children's Rights

During war we are more vulnerable to the abuse of your rights. War makes our societies more violent, and children suffer the results of this violence. Children are orphaned without any support, abducted to serve in armies, sexually abused by armed groups and may be forced into prostitution because there are no alternatives when family members are killed. In some cases children are dehumanized through drugs and propaganda. In other cases, child soldiers choose to become soldiers in order to protect themselves and their families, or to gain food, shelter and in some cases, a sense of family. In either case, rehabilitation programs are needed to deal with all aspects of war-related trauma among youth both during and after conflict. In order to recover, we need counselling and we need to know our rights - the right not to be abused, raped, especially in times of war when we are vulnerable to abuse.
In the case of child soldiers, we demand that no young person under the age of 18 be recruited by either force or choice into the armed forces. Those who refuse to abide by this fundamental human right should be punished and shamed among the nations.

How we will help to work on these issues

Through examination of our priorities and recognition of the vital importance of action, we have come to the conclusion that as youth, it is ultimately our responsibility to put our own words into action and urge the adult participants of this conference to follow suit.

Communications Youth Program (Media and Outreach)

Overview

The Youth Media Team at the War Affected Children's International conference included twenty-five youth participants from Winnipeg and across Canada, five full-time Students Commission staff, and two part-time support staff. The Youth Media Team worked together from September 10 - 17, 2000. The team had two main goals: 1) to work as youth journalists to report on the conference, and 2) to create and present a workshop to increase awareness about the issues of the conference to students in Winnipeg schools.

- covered events during the International Conference from September 10 - 17
- produced four newsletters on the International Conference
- created a website reporting by youth from the International Conference (can be found by going to www.tgmag.ca and clicking on the "War-Affected Children" link)
- gave a presentation to Minister Axworthy's office on the National Forum at Gimli
- developed a workshop on war-affected children to deliver to high school students
- gave 20 workshops at 8 schools in Winnipeg on war-affected children
- acted as media liaison officers for international and Canadian delegates
- participated in a webchat with Minister Axworthy and a webcast with Unicef head of radio South Asia
- gave interviews to print, radio and tv media
- gave a dynamic presentation the International Conference to about 80,000 people at the War Child concert (you should've heard the cheers!)
- **taught the "we're going to F-I-G-H-T for the P-E-A-C-E cheer" to 80,000 people at the War Child concert**

The Week at a Glance

The Youth Media Team worked for eight days throughout the conference. Here is a look at what happened each day:

- **Day 1 -** The media team broke off into three groups for training. Group 1 developed the workshop that would be presented in schools later in the week. Group 2 went to the conference Media Center to be trained by media/communications experts on their role as media officers at workshops, and on their role as media liaison officers in coordinating media interviews with youth. Group 3 was trained in journalism (the basics: who, what, when, where, why, angle, libel, slander, etc.) and in technical skills (digital photos, digital camera, web and newsletter layout, uploading, editing photos).
- **Day 2 -** The media team broke again into three groups. Group 1 from Sunday finished preparing the workshop in the morning, and in the afternoon, presented it three times to students and a community group. A reporter team covered various events at the conference. A web and newsletter team went to the Sisler Media Center to finish writing stories and begin newsletter and web layout. Two members of the team.
- **Day 3 -** The entire media team was trained in doing the workshop. Later in the afternoon, the team worked on stories. Two members of the team worked at the conference Media Center for the entire day as media liaison officers.
- **Day 4 -** Two groups travelled to various schools throughout the day presenting workshops. A third group stayed at the hotel to work on collecting content and writing stories.
- **Day 5 -** Two groups travelled to various schools throughout the day presenting workshops. A third group stayed at the hotel to work on collecting content and writing stories.
- **Day 6 -** Two groups travelled to various schools throughout the day presenting workshops. A third group stayed at the hotel to work on collecting content and writing stories. In the evening, eight members of the team prepared a presentation for the War Child Concert the next day.
- **Day 7 -** The media team attended the War Child Concert. Eight members of the team made a dynamic presentation to the crowd of 80,000, which was followed by interviews with MuchMusic, Craig Productions, and War Child.
- **Day 8 -** Clean-up, wrap-up, and newsletter distribution!

Next time ... Due to the fact that training time was limited for members of the Media Team, not everyone got trained in all areas. We counted on the youth to mentor their peers and pass on the skills that they had learned. This did happen to some extent. Ideally, however, each person would be trained in the three main areas right from the start: workshop presentation/facilitation, journalism, and technical skills.

Next time ... Ideally, the youth team members would have done all the layout out of the newsletter and the web site, as well as the writing. However, given the lack of training time and support available, the Students Commission staff did most layout, uploading, etc. In the future, media youth with strong technical backgrounds could be recruited, and then work in pairs with other media youth participants to do this job.

Next time ... The teams changed every day, based on people's strengths and desires. This was both a good thing and a bad thing. It was good because people got to do what they wanted each day, and because it allowed people to rotate through various roles. It was bad because it was very confusing, and because it made it very difficult for journalists to finish their stories if they were on a workshop team the next day! Next time, if there are external (i.e. workshops) and an internal (i.e. journalists) communication teams, these teams should be defined from the outset, work together for a couple days, and then switch roles. For example, the workshop team could have worked together for days 1-3, and then switched over to being youth journalists for days 4-6.

Our Venues

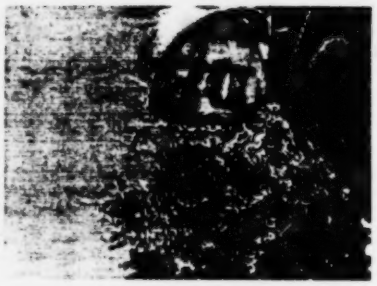
Our Youth Media Team operated out of three main venues: the Youth Communications Center at Sisler High School, a hotel suite at the Place Louis Riel, and the official Media Center at the conference site. We also worked at eight different high schools in Winnipeg presenting workshops. Multiple venues made it difficult to coordinate the group, but were necessary due to the large size of our team. Some things we learned through this experience include:

- in order to keep track of "who's where", ask each person in the morning to write out their plan for the day and post it on the wall in a central location. Each time a person changes venues, ask them to call with their new location. This makes it much easier to find someone when you need them!
- have everyone meet in one central location in the morning to debrief from the previous day and brief for the coming day. This helps to keep the team connected, despite the various working venues.
- **Next time ...** if at all possible, have one venue to keep it simple!

Transportation

Due to our multiple venues, and the fact that many of our delegates slept at home or with billets in Winnipeg, transportation was an issue. We had two rental vehicles, a mini-van and a car. We hired a driver and a 14 passenger van for days 2 - 6 of the event to drive to workshops. Ellen Stewart came with an 8 passenger van for the last three days of the event. The rental vehicles were used minimally for transportation to and from workshops, as most of the staff accompanying teams to workshops could not drive. The rental vehicles, especially the van, were still necessary for running errands, etc.

In the mornings and evenings, the driver would pick-up and drop-off Winnipeg participants. However, some participants still traveled by taxi in the mornings and at night, because it took the driver too long to pick-up/drop-off everyone



Next time ... Ensure that the entire team is staying in one central location to solve the transportation issue (as well as many others!). Remember that to send someone home at night in a taxi and pick them up again the next morning can cost up to $60 - compared to the cost of a night in the hotel, it may be more cost efficient to have them all stay in the hotel.

Equipment

The equipment at the Sisler Media Center included:

- 5 PC computers with Adobe Photoshop, WS-ftp, Internet Explorer, Microsoft Word, and First Class
- a laser printer
- a phone/fax machine (was not used much)

The equipment in the media room at the hotel included:

- 7 iBooks
- 1 DV iMac
- laser printer
- digital camera
- digital video camera

At the conference Media Center, the following equipment was available for all journalists' use:

- PC computers with word processors and Internet access
- telephones

Next time ... In an ideal world, we would have only had iBooks, and we would have had more of them. It was confusing when we had to transfer files from the PC's to the Mac's. We had to retype several files and lost others due to this.

Our Staff Roles

Our five full-time Students Commission support staff took on the following informal roles within the Youth Media Team (this is meant to give an idea of the roles required and how they fit together, not to evaluate what each person did):

- Jeff - technical support (equipment set-up/take-down, video camera, networking)
- Michelle - workshop support (booking times and going to workshops with teams)
- Krista - technical support (equipment booking, digital camera) web templates and design, newsletter templates and layout, logistics support (food, supplies)
- Kristin - workshop support (content and going with teams to workshops), newsletter content and layout, program support (agendas, teams, and roles)
- Maureen - logistics support (overall), newsletter content and layout, media relations support, program support (agendas, teams, roles)

We had three additional part-time support staff:

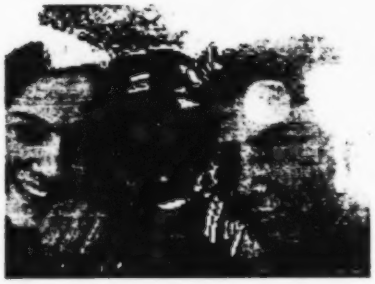
- Peter Moore - worked for the first three days with our team to train the journalists, help them find content, decide story angles, and edit stories. It would have been excellent to have Peter work with the team the entire time doing this job.
- Ellen Stewart - worked for the last three days with our team going out to workshops and helping to prepare the team for the presentation at the War Child concert.

Next time ... What we lacked in terms of staff/roles:

- Someone to focus on story content and editing - Peter did this for the first three days, but that was when the ball was just starting to roll. We needed someone working full time to find strong story content and edit articles.
- A "go-fer" - As the week progressed, two media team participants, Rizza and Jill, took on this role. However, this meant that they did not have as much time to participate in the media-related activities of the conference.

Youth Media Liaison Officers

At the beginning of the week, we assigned two youth to work as media liaison officers to help deal with the overwhelming media attention. These two youth, Jill and Rizza, were based out of the conference Media Center. This way, they could take media requests that came into the media center, and then liaise between the media and Stoney or Barb to book interviews. Because there were so many calls, and because it was confusing to have so many levels of communication, Stoney and Barb began taking all media requests for the youth delegates after the first two days of the conference.



Next time ... Don't underestimate the media attention that a high profile event will get! Have a full-time media relations staff person. This staff person would need:

- a list of who's available for interviews and when, with backgrounders on them
- a cell phone and a number that is distributed only to media
- to be physically close to the youth in order to liaise between the media and the youth
- a set of firm parameters for media interviews
- staff people available to sit in on scheduled interviews

Outreach

Part of the Youth Media Team's role was to reach out into the Winnipeg community and help spread awareness about the issues of the conference. The team's outreach accomplishments included the following:

1. A partnership with Sisler High School. Sisler High School hosted our Youth Media Center, and in return, received spots for four of their students on the Youth Media Team, invitations to the Steam Train Social Night, media coverage (CBC TV in Winnipeg and others), and conference backpacks and posters.

Contact information: Ken Corley, Hope Kideckel, George Heshka, and Dennis Mogg c/o Sisler High School, 1360 Redwood Avenue, Winnipeg, MB, R2X 0Z1 Phone: (204) 589-8321

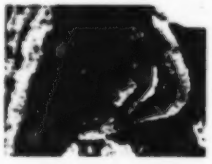
2. Twenty workshops in eight Winnipeg Schools and to one community group:
    - Glenlawn School - Contact information: Lorraine O'Connor (teacher),Phone: (204) 233-3986
    - Art City Mural Project - Contact information: Katharina, Phone: (204) 582-1731
    - College Louis Riel - Contact information: Emile Hacault (teacher), 505 St. Jean Baptiste, Phone: (204) 237-8927
    - General Wolfe School - Contact information: Jim Ludwig (teacher), 661 Banning, Phone: (204) 786-7427
    - Kelvin High School - Contact information: Ray Sokolski and Laura Sims (teachers), 155 Kingsway Ave, Phone: (204) 474-1492
    - College Jeanne Sauve - Contact information: Helene Roy (teacher), 1128 Dakota Street, Phone: (204) 257-0124
    - Kildonan School - Contact information: MICHELLE
    - Widsor Park School - Contact information: Alix Jean-Paul (teacher), XXX Cottonwood, Phone: (204) 256-7316
    - Sisler High School - Contact information - Ms. Hanischuk, Ms. Dietz, and Mr. Corley (teachers), 1360 Redwood Avenue, Phone: (204) 589-8321
3. Media coverage of the workshops:
    - A Channel TV
    - Cantilevers Peace Media
    - Winnipeg Free Press
    - BBC United Kingdom
    - Conference Secretariat Website
    - CBC French TV
    - CKSB French Radio
    - CKY 5 News
4. A print and online workshop guide that can be used by youth and teachers in their own school.
5. A team of over a dozen committed Winnipeg youth who will continue to reach out into the community with the workshop and other. awareness tools, even after the conference has ended.

The Youth Media Center and our Partner, Sisler High School

Sisler High School partnered with our Youth Media Team by providing a Youth Media Center. Ken Corley, Hope Kideckel, George Heshka (the principal), and Dennis Mogg (the technical staff person) were the driving forces behind this partnership. When this partnership was made venues were uncertain, and a central location was needed.

Next time ... In retrospect, this venue was not needed, however, the Youth Media Team could not leave the venue because the school was so excited to have them in their school. Some things that were learned from this partnership:

- Sisler High School was excited to be able to help out. However, the teachers still did expect some things in return. In order to make sure they felt that they were getting something out of the partnership, they received:
    - media coverage
    - 4 spots for their students on the media team
    - conference backpacks, posters, and media team newsletters as thank-you's
    - invitations to the steam train social evening

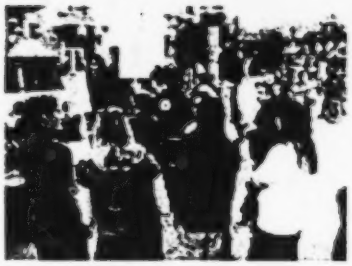


Next time ... Ideally, we would have been able to invite the four teachers to a high profile event at the conference. This is what they asked for all along, however, it was not feasible at the time.

- Even if you want to break off a partnership because it is not convenient (in this case, Sisler HS was very far from the main conference site), don't do it! It was important to keep working at Sisler, because a lot of teachers had put in many hours to make the Youth Media Center a reality. In the end, the Youth Media Team used the Sisler Media Center as a place to come to before and after workshops to work on stories.

Outcome: The Workshop

The workshop presented in schools was created by members of the Youth Media Team. All members of the Team are now trained in presenting this workshop. The workshop has been captured in a print guide, which is online, so that it can be used by teachers and students in their own schools. The workshop has also been captured on digital video camera, both in English and in French.



Outcome: The Newsletter

Four editions of the newsletter, "War Solutions: Powered by Youth", were produced by the Youth Media Team. The newsletters varied in length from four to six pages. The newsletters are available in print and online. Some of the articles are excellent supplements to the workshop.

Next time ... The newsletters lack in French content, because our Francophone Team members were kept busy presenting the workshop in French. As always, we need to ensure that we have more Francophone members on our team. Also, the first newsletter lacked in significant content, because there was limited staff guidance in helping the writers find good content. As mentioned before, we need one staff person dedicated to finding content and editing stories

Outcome: The Website

The newsletter and workshop will be/have been put online!. They can be found at www.tgmag.ca by clicking on the WarSolutions/Powered by Youth icon.

The following people/groups are interested in linking to/from our website (contacts which need to be pursued!):

- Department of Foreign Affairs (contact person: Brigitte Duschene - (613) 944-3002)
- War Affected Children Secretariat (contact person: Ray Zwicker - (613) 290-2368 ray.zwicker@dfait-maeci.gc.ca)
- Voices of Youth Unicef Website (contact person: Susan Fountain)
- Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development (contact person: Peter Moore (613) 944-0655 info.ccfpd@dfait-maeci.gc.ca)

List of Contact People

Media
1. Carol Sanders - Winnipeg Free Press, (204) 697-7084 (did journalism workshop and covered event)
2. Carol O'Brien - CBC French TV, (204) 788-3267
3. Joni Nicolo - CBC TV Winnipeg, (204) 788-3629
4. Nancy Westaway - CBC Radio "As It Happens", (416) 205-2645
5. Karen Sanders - CBC Radio Winnipeg, (204) 788-3722
6. Wilf - A-Channel, (204) 934-8018
7. Linda Wilson - CBC TV, (204) 789-0412
8. Trevor - Grassroots (aboriginal newspaper), (204) 589-7495
9. Louise Schrette - CBC Radio Winnipeg, (204) 788-3069
10. Cara Lavan and Stefan Pavlik - BBC UK Horizons and Red Production, 447-7980-691-250
11. Ginger - Spanish Service Netherlands Radio, (204) 269-0484
12. Gilbert Gregory - Winnipeg School Division Newsletter, (204) 775-0231 x347
13. David Foster - Associated Press, cell (360) 951-8657
14. Andrea Christian - Rutherford Radio in Calgary, (403) 218-3526
15. Roger LeGendre - Radio Canada, (514) 597-4789
16. Everett Martin - University of MB Paper, (204) 488-3888
17. Kevin Dunn - Craig Productions, (204) 771-3376
18. Denise - Much Music, denised@muchmusic.com, (416) 591-7400 x2220
19. Harry Callaghan - CJOB Radio, (204100) 786-3421
20. Leonora Chapman - RCI Radio, (514) 597-7514
21. Lee Carter - BBC Radio
22. Jonathan Gravenor - CTV National, (204) 781-4069
23. Katrina Paron - Children's Express (News service with Adolescent reporters), (212) 741-4700
24. Stefanie - CBC Newsworld, (416) 205-8788
25. Adam Killick - National Post, (204) 793-7815
26. Christian Volgat - CBC Radio, (204) 788-3116
27. Sasa Petricil - The National, (613) 751-3413
28. Yvan Clouthier - Radio Canada, pager (416) 664-1689
29. Rosa Rivera - United Nations Radio, (212) 579-4515
30. Eric Abitol - Cantilevers Peace Media (Print)
31. Michel Boucher - CKSB French Radio, (204) 788-3252
32. Gord Smeby - CKY 5 News, (204) 775-8016

Community
1. Brooke McNab - University of Winnipeg, (204) 786-9103
2. Ken Corley - Sisler High School, (204) 589-8321
3. Winnipeg Schools - See list in Outreach section
4. George Andrews - Catering, (204) 487-7300
5. Vital Transportation (Garry/Karen) - Buses and vans, (204) 633-2022
6. Kristin Normandin - Unicef Youth Outreach, (204) 984-0310
7. Ellen Stewart - Sioux Lookout, (807) 737-1299 - hm, (807) 737-1501 - wk

List of Contact People

Media

1. **Carol Sanders - Winnipeg Free Press, (204) 697-7084 (did journalism workshop and covered event)**
2. Carol O'Brien - CBC French TV, (204) 788-3267
3. **Joni Nicolo - CBC TV Winnipeg, (204) 788-3629**
4. Nancy Westaway - CBC Radio "As It Happens", (416) 205-2645
5. **Karen Sanders - CBC Radio Winnipeg, (204) 788-3722**
6. Wilf - A-Channel, (204) 934-8018
7. **Linda Wilson - CBC TV, (204) 789-0412**
8. Trevor - Grassroots (aboriginal newspaper), (204) 589-7495
9. **Louise Schrette - CBC Radio Winnipeg, (204) 788-3069**
10. Cara Lavan and Stefan Pavlik - BBC UK Horizons and Red Production, 447-7980-691-250
11. **Ginger - Spanish Service Netherlands Radio, (204) 269-0484**
12. Gilbert Gregory - Winnipeg School Division Newsletter, (204) 775-0231 x347
13. **David Foster - Associated Press, cell (360) 951-8657**
14. Andrea Christian - Rutherford Radio in Calgary, (403) 218-3526
15. **Roger LeGendre - Radio Canada, (514) 597-4789**
16. Everett Martin - University of MB Paper, (204) 488-3888
17. **Kevin Dunn - Craig Productions, (204) 771-3376**
18. Denise - Much Music, denised@muchmusic.com, (416) 591-7400 x2220
19. **Harry Callaghan - CJOB Radio, (204100) 786-3421**
20. Leonora Chapman - RCI Radio, (514) 597-7514
21. **Lee Carter - BBC Radio**
22. Jonathan Gravenor - CTV National, (204) 781-4069
23. **Katrina Paron - Children's Express (News service with Adolescent reporters), (212) 741-4700**
24. Stefanie - CBC Newsworld, (416) 205-8788
25. **Adam Killick - National Post, (204) 793-7815**
26. Christian Volgat - CBC Radio, (204) 788-3116
27. **Sasa Petricil - The National, (613) 751-3413**
28. Yvan Clouthier - Radio Canada, pager (416) 664-1689
29. **Rosa Rivera - United Nations Radio, (212) 579-4515**
30. Eric Abitol - Cantilevers Peace Media (Print)
31. **Michel Boucher - CKSB French Radio, (204) 788-3252**
32. Gord Smeby - CKY 5 News, (204) 775-8016

Community

1. **Brooke McNab - University of Winnipeg, (204) 786-9103**
2. Ken Corley - Sisler High School, (204) 589-8321
3. **Winnipeg Schools - See list in Outreach section**
4. George Andrews - Catering, (204) 487-7300
5. **Vital Transportation (Garry/Karen) - Buses and vans, (204) 633-2022**
6. Kristin Normandin - Unicef Youth Outreach, (204) 984-0310
7. **Ellen Stewart - Sioux Lookout, (807) 737-1299 - hm, (807) 737-1501 - wk**

YOUTH WORKSHOP

The Youth Media Team:

Diane Adams
Jill Akman
Kyle Bird
Natalie Bisson
Laura Carbone
Armando Castro
Jennifer Chomokovski
Myles Debastien
Caroline Gauthier
Raphael Gauthier
Stephinie Glodu
Courtney Gossfeld
Diana Ibrahim
Sergio Jiminez
Grace Karisio
Elvira Kastrati
Emmanuel Kedini
Ashley Lam
Jenna MacLellan
Trevor Meredith
Ryann Pauze
Destiny Reeves
Rizza Reyes
Krista Riley
Rose Tandel

Introduction: At a National Youth Forum on war affected children in Gimli, MB, seventy-five youth from across Canada and around the world developed a series of recommendations. Some of the recommendations included are:

- Educate children within schools about current events and refugees
- In schools, address the issues as part of the curriculum
- Educate children in schools about the plight of refugees

In response to these recommendations, the youth media team at the conference developed this youth workshop. Please use it in your classroom, with your community youth group … with everyone you know to help us spread awareness!

Workshop Outline:

- Drawing Activity OR Short Scenario Activity (5-10 minutes)
- Narrative and Discussion (15-25 minutes)
- Quiz (10-15 minutes)
- Action Discussion (5-15 minutes)
- Summary Drawing (5 minutes)

Purpose:
This activity was designed to break the myths of war. It can also be used to determine whether or not the workshop has been successful, as it will reflect what has been learned.

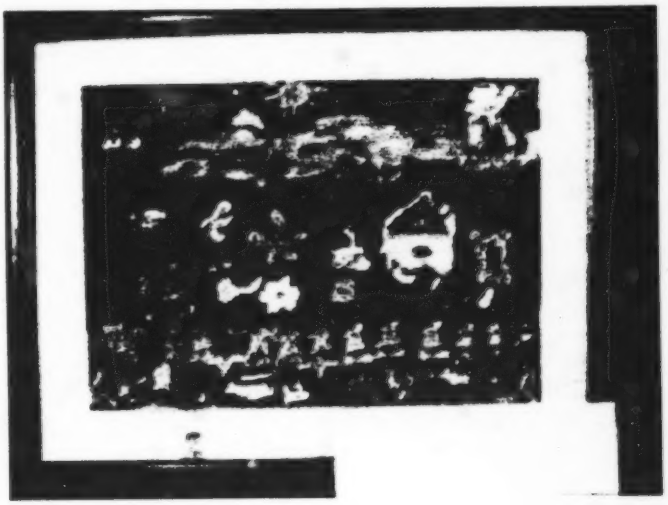
Materials Needed:
A writing utensil, paper, and an active imagination!

Time:
5-10 minutes

Instructions:

- When students are ready, ask them to take out a pen and paper. Tell them to draw a picture of what they think war looks like.
- Tell them to draw quickly, three minutes should be adequate.
- When they are done, ask them to list what is in their pictures (or what they would have put in their pictures had they been able to finish!). Expect things like guns, blood, dead bodies, and tanks to go on the list.
- Tell them to put their pictures aside.
- Carry on with the remainder of the workshop.
- After the workshop is finished, tell them to take out their pictures again.

Depending on time, you can tell them to add anything they want to their pictures. If you're running out of time, simply ask if they WOULD add to their picture, and add these to the list from earlier.



YOUTH WORKSHOP

Created by the Youth Media Team at the International Conference on War-Affected Children – Winnipeg, MB, Canada
September, 2000

The Youth Media Team:

Diane Adams
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- Quiz (10-15 minutes)
- Action Discussion (5-15 minutes)
- Summary Drawing (5 minutes)

DRAWING ACTIVITY

Created by the youth media team at the International Conference on War-Affected Children
September 2000

Purpose:
This activity was designed to break the myths of war. It can also be used to determine whether or not the workshop has been successful, as it will reflect what has been learned.

Materials Needed:
A writing utensil, paper, and an active imagination!

Time:
5-10 minutes

Instructions:

- When students are ready, ask them to take out a pen and paper. Tell them to draw a picture of what they think war looks like.
- Tell them to draw quickly, three minutes should be adequate.
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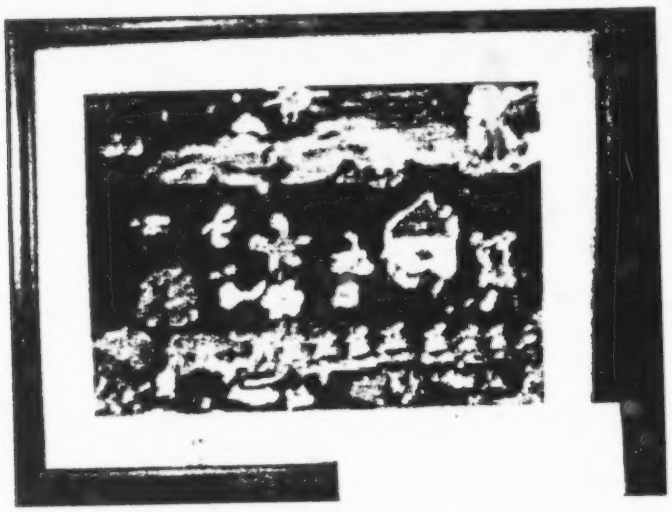


Purpose:
This activity shows some of the traumatizing things happening to children in war-affected areas.

Materials Needed:
Personal information sheets (in Appendix A) and envelopes.

Time:
5-10 minutes

Instructions:

- Put personal information sheets in envelopes, or simply fold them and tape them closed.
- Pass one out to every student, or even just a few. If you prefer they can be set out on desks before the workshop begins.
- Allow participants to read out their sheets.

Once they have read it, ask them their thoughts. Ask people to share what is on their sheet, and explain that these are common occurrences for people living in war-affected areas.

Purpose:
The point of the activity is to allow you to visualize some of the sights and emotions that a child from a war affected country may experience. More than 300,000 children are child soldiers and more than 10 million have been killed in the past 10 years in war and more will continue to be, if action is not taken. Awareness is the first step to take in order to achieve our goal of peace. Again, the experiences expressed here are real life experiences. Although they may seem graphic, these are some of the less horrific experiences.

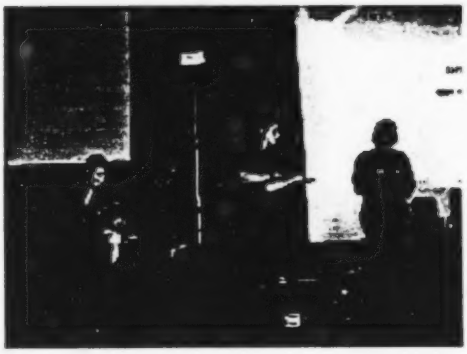
Materials Needed:
Narrative text (in Appendix B).

Time:
15-25 minutes

Instructions:

- To begin this exercise, ask the group to sit quietly with their eyes closed. Some people may choose to rest their heads.
- Explain that the ideas and scenes expressed through this text were taken from the stories shared by our delegates through out the conference
- Warn your audience that the text that you are about to read to them may cause discomfort to some. Let them know that if at any point in the activity, they find themselves feeling uncomfortable that they may step out.
- Read the text slowly and with emotion.
- Consider the following questions in groups or as a class. You may choose to give several minutes for personal reflection.

What did my eyes see?
What did I feel?
How will this change me/my future?



SCENARIO ACTIVITY

Created by the Youth Media Team of the International Conference on War-Affected Children – Winnipeg, MB, Canada
September, 2000

Purpose:
This activity shows some of the traumatizing things happening to children in war-affected areas.

Materials Needed:
Personal information sheets (in Appendix A) and envelopes.

Time:
5-10 minutes

Instructions:

- Put personal information sheets in envelopes, or simply fold them and tape them closed.
- Pass one out to every student, or even just a few. If you prefer they can be set out on desks before the workshop begins.
- Allow participants to read out their sheets.

Once they have read it, ask them their thoughts. Ask people to share what is on their sheet, and explain that these are common occurrences for people living in war-affected areas.

NARRATIVE and DISCUSSION

Created by the Youth Media Team of the International Conference on War Affected Children – Winnipeg, MB, Canada September, 2000

Instructions:

Purpose:
The point of the activity is to allow you to visualize some of the sights and emotions that a child from a war affected country may experience. More than 300,000 children are child soldiers and more than 10 million have been killed in the past 10 years in war and more will continue to be, if action is not taken. Awareness is the first step to take in order to achieve our goal of peace. Again, the experiences expressed here are real life experiences. Although they may seem graphic, these are some of the less horrific experiences.

Materials Needed:
Narrative text (in Appendix B)

Time:
15-25 minutes

- To begin this exercise, ask the group to sit quietly with their eyes closed. Some people may choose to rest their heads.
- Explain that the ideas and scenes expressed through this text were taken from the stories shared by our delegates through out the conference.
- Warn your audience that the text that you are about to read to them may cause discomfort to some. Let them know that if at any point in the activity, they find themselves feeling uncomfortable that they may step out.
- Read the text slowly and with emotion.
- Consider the following questions in groups or as a class. You may choose to give several minutes for personal reflection.

What did my eyes see?
What did I feel?
How will this change me/my future?

Purpose:
This activity helps to raise awareness by offering facts on the issues surrounding war-affected children.

Materials Needed:
Copies of the quiz (found in Appendix C).

Time:
10-15 minutes

Instructions:

- Give students each a copy of the quiz, or complete it together as a class.
- Share the correct answers:
- c
- b (This does not include injury or disability.)
- c
- a
- b
- c (Only 10% of people killed in war are active participants in war.)

Discuss people's reactions to the correct answers. How did the truth make you feel?

Purpose:
This activity helps to inform students about the possibility of involvement and to raise awareness.

Materials Needed:
Copies of cool websites to visit (in Appendix D).

Time:
5-15 minutes

- Discuss or brainstorm as a class specific actions that people can take to raise awareness or get involved. If some of the students in the class, or the presenters, are already involved in action projects, give them the opportunity to explain their involvement.
  Here are some ideas:
  - Get informed!
  - Help spread awareness about war-affected children – hold a workshop, invite a guest speaker to your school
  - Start a petitions
  - Fundraising events for various organizations and causes
  - Raise money and awareness by putting on a benefit concert for war-affected children at your school
  - Volunteer for an organization that helps war-affected children
  - Once you're informed, write a letter to your MP on Canada's involvement
- Distribute copies of cool websites to visit, or go through them together as a class.

Summary Drawing Activity

(5 minutes) As explained in previous instructions for the Drawing Activity, ask students to take out their pictures and discuss whether there are additional items they would like to add to their list. If the workshop has been effective, you'll find that students begin to see more emotional and less material associations to the topic of war.

Scenarios – Appendix A

QUIZ
Created by the Youth Social Team of the
International Conference on War-Affected
Children – Winnipeg, MB, Canada
September, 2000

Purpose:
This activity helps to raise awareness by offering facts on the issues surrounding war-affected children.

Materials Needed:
Copies of the quiz (found in Appendix C).

Time:
10-15 minutes

Instructions:

- Give students each a copy of the quiz, or complete it together as a class.
- Share the correct answers:
- c
- b (This does not include injury or disability.)
- c
- a
- b
- c (Only 10% of people killed in war are active participants in war.)

Discuss people's reactions to the correct answers. How did the truth make you feel?

ACTION DISCUSSION and SUMMARY DRAWING

Created by the Youth Media Team of the International Conference on War Affected Children – Winnipeg, MB, Canada – September 2000

Purpose:
This activity helps to inform students about the possibility of involvement and to raise awareness.

Materials Needed:
Copies of cool websites to visit (in Appendix D).

Time:
5-15 minutes

- Discuss or brainstorm as a class specific actions that people can take to raise awareness or get involved. If some of the students in the class, or the presenters, are already involved in action projects, give them the opportunity to explain their involvement.

  Here are some ideas:
  - Get informed!
  - Help spread awareness about war-affected children – hold a workshop, invite a guest speaker to your school
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Your name is Miko. You live in Cambodia. One day, while playing in your family's garden, you step on a landmine. You lose your left leg. There is a landmine somewhere in the world for every eight children.

Your name is Christine. You live in Sudan. You're thirteen years old. You were abducted from your home and now you're a prostitute. You're also pregnant. Young girls are often the worst victims of war. They are forced to be soldiers' wives, slaves, and/or cooks.

Your name is Carlos. You live in Columbia. You are ten years old. You were abducted from your home and now you are a child soldier. Young boys as young as six years old are known to be armed soldiers.

Appendix B – Narrative Text

You were awakened at 5:37 this morning by the sound of a gunshot. You instinctively turned the radio on to hear the latest report. A bomb had gone off near your local cultural centre. There were five casualties: two adults…and three children. Do you know these people? Were they your neighbours? At 7:25 you leave for school, you don't want to go for fear of coming home to a deserted house. As you walk to school, you spot the body of a young man in a back alley. You are afraid…a close friend was recently raped and another had been enlisted.

It's difficult to concentrate during class. How do you know that your school is safe? You think of the three dead children. Few teachers and fewer students are showing up and you decide to rush home before last period. You stop dead in front of your house. Your windows are broken and vicious graffiti is spread out on the walls. As you walk in, you hear the sobs of your mother. You find her bruised and bloody body on the floor. Through her wailing you understand that your father has been arrested. You've heard stories about the prisons but hope that they weren't true. You also know that your mother has been raped although you won't admit it to yourself. That evening, your mother packs small bags for you and your siblings; you are being sent to live with distant relatives. She is staying to wait for your father. Now you can only pray that they will survive.

Appendix C – The Quiz

- How many landmines are still burning in the 10 main affected countries (Peru, Ecquador, Chile, Bolivia, Argentina, Columbia, Nicaragua, Honduras, Costa Rica, and Guatamala)?
  a) 00,000
  b) 1 million
  c) More than 1 million

- How many children are killed by landmines each month?
  a) 1,000
  b) 800
  c) 500

- How many children have been killed in the last 10 years as a result of wars and armed conflict?
  a) 2.5 million
  b) million
  c) 2 million

- How many children under 18 are currently taking part in hostilities around the world (i.e. child soldiers)?
  a) 300,000
  b) 200,000
  c) 00,000

- How much money (in US$) does the world spend every year on the military?
  a) 420 billion
  b) 740 billion
  c) 230 billion

- What percentage of people killed in war are civilians?
  a) 60 %
  b) 75 %
  c) 90 %

Cool Websites – Appendix D

Taking Action! Places to Start

Here's some websites that we found that are a good source of information and ideas on actions that you can take.

War Affected Children
www.waraffectedchildren.gc.ca

- This website provides information, multimedia features and interactive elements on the events leading up to and including the International Conference on War-affected Children. See what national and international actions are being taken to address the issues.

Oxfam: Get Involved
www.oxfam.org.uk/get_involved.html

- As well as actions you can take on-line now, there are opportunities to get involved with Oxfam as a volunteer. This site provides information you need to take part in upcoming campaign and fundraising events.

Students Against Landmines
www.cyberfair.gsn.org

- An interactive Web site created by students to help other students learn about issues surrounding anti-personnel landmine.

UNICEF – Voices of Youth
www.unicef.org/voy

- Take part in an electronic discussion about the future of youth.

War Child
www.warchild.ca

- Besides information on the organization and its humanitarian activities including War Child's fundraising concerts, public appeals, and other entertainment events.

Amnesty
www.amnesty.ca

- Work for human rights on an ongoing basis by becoming part of the world's largest rights organization.

National Forum 2000
www.cfp.pec.gc.ca/NationalForum/nati-e.htm *(english)*
www.cfp.pec.gc.ca/NationalForum/nati-f.htm *(french)*

- The Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development developed the National Forum 2000 for Youth in War-Affected Children to involve youth and raise their voices to be heard by the Canadian government and policy makers. This web site includes learning modules for elementary and secondary levels, as well as summaries of the National Forum roundtables and events.

War Solutions

Powered by youth

Les solutions pour la guerre

Dirigées par les jeunes

Edition 1 / Edition no. 1

Mission Statement

Diana , MB & Armando, ON

At this conference our main goal is to help war affected children around the world. We want to help not only those children in war zones, but also those who have left their countries either as refugees, or as immigrants. We believe that raising awareness around the world about these people is a good beginning. We can do that by making programs that will go around to schools and educate the students. By informing the media, they can also help spread the word.

Our second goal is to find solutions to stop and prevent wars and put these solutions into action. We think that issues such as sanctions, child soldiers, arm trades should all be debated and discussed, so people can make the right decisions. There are many other ways to find solutions. All we are asking from the Canadian government at this point in time is to not only listen to the youth perspective, but also to take our recommendations into consideration, and put them into action. We would like to create an international voice, so we can be listened to, and pressure the government to help. We want all our questions answered directly and truthfully.

Our dream of peace might come true, if we all work together.

The Food in GIMLI

Emmanuel, ON

In Canada people usually eat whatever they want. In Winnipeg, Manitoba, there are a wide variety of nutritious foods from all over. You can sit down at home or at a restaurant and enjoy your meal. Sometimes if you want you can share your food, and sometimes you choose not to.

A couple of youths from the International Conference were interviewed on the food at the National Forum in Gimli, Manitoba. Armando Castro is a participant in this year's International Conference on War-Affected Children. Eight months ago he came to Canada from Brazil. He said that in Brazil people usually eat rice, beans, farofa, and cuzcuz. The biggest meal in Brazil is lunch. When he was staying in Gimli at the lodge, he enjoyed the bread and cheese.

Kyle Bird is a Native youth from Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. Caribou and some other meat are the most common in Yellowknife. The chili was his favorite at the lodge in Gimli. In his opinion, the bad thing about the food they served were the eggs - they were grey. His favorite food is steak.

Trevor is a youth from Winnipeg. He's a high school student who goes to Sisler High School. At Gimili, he enjoyed the chicken and burgers. One day he remembers the rice was too dry and there wasn't enough food. His favorite food is steak.

A lot of youths had a lot of things in common, but the main things that stood out were the flies. There were flies everywhere. Sometimes it seems like you weren't actually eating but swooping flies from your food all through lunch.

The rice was another dilemma. One early morning some youth were lining up to get their breakfast and out of no where a server popped up the question, 'Would you like some rice for breakfast?' Some youth were surprised by this unusual question; they just stared and said politely but simply, 'No, thanks.'

On a personal note: I had no complaints about the food, well, except the rice, the tomato soup, the Jell-O, and the flies.

Portraits of Children in Conflicts

Krista, ON

Through out the National Forum in Gimli, Manitoba, Canada, experiences were constantly being shared, but nothing was a better representation of the collective stories and feelings of war than the silhouettes painted by each group. The activity consisted of creating two silhouettes by tracing the shapes of a male and a female and decorating them to reflect the emotion and trauma of living through a war.

Each of the seven groups designed silhouettes based on their answers to four questions: what their eyes had seen, what their mind remembered, what their body had experienced and what their heart had felt. They also wrote words on the canvas to explain their feelings. One group wrote a poem about what they had endured. Many groups had at least one person in the fetal position to represent fear, helplessness, innocence, self-protection or often a combination of these elements. Some paintings had people holding their arms out to each other but unable to reach, illustrating the separation that war causes. One group drew a child soldier standing strong, proud and powerful, but also wrote his true feelings of fear and anxiety on the page to remind everyone that he was still a child.

Some of the groups added a positive element to their silhouettes: hope. The message on one of them said, "Dark past, bright future." Another had dark hands around the silhouette to show how it had been hurt, but there were also bright hands approaching the victim to help it. The group explained that those were the hands of the youth at the conference who have not only discussed the problem, but also created solutions and recommendations to solve it. As one girl said, "The worst thing we can do is to let our fears get bigger than our hopes."

PEINE ET SOUFFRANCE: LES VICTIMES CONTENT ET REVIVENT

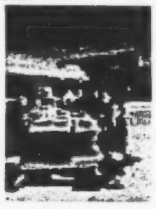
Natalie, MB

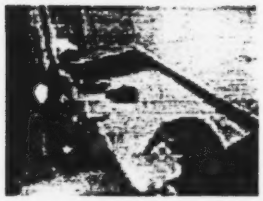
La semaine passée, 75 jeunes de plus de 28 pays du monde se sont rencontrés à Misty Lake Lodge près de Gimli. Chacun d'entre eux a apporté sa propre histoire de guerre, de souffrance et de peine.

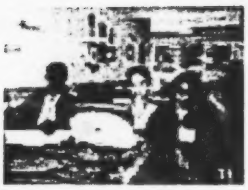
Plusieurs délégués canadiens se sont demandé si les jeunes de pays affectés de guerre se sentaient à l'aise à raconter leurs histoires devant des dixaines de journalistes, d'amis, ou d'étrangers. Elvira Kastrati, une jeune femme du Kosovo agée de 19 ans dit, « J'aime quand on me demande mon histoire de guerre. C'est comme si on se souci vraiment de se qui c'est passé. Mais ce n'est pas la même chose avec tout le monde. Des fois, j'ai l'impression que ceux qui me demandent comment c'etait se sentent obligés de le demander ». Emmanuel Kedini, lui aussi agé de 19 ans mais originaire du Soudan se sent ouvert au sujet de la guerre dans son pays. Il veut que les gens soient au courrant de ce qui se passe au Soudan.

Aussi du Soudan, Diana Ibrahim a quitté son pays à l'age de 13 ans et habite présentement Winnipeg. Maintenant agée de 18 ans, elle affirme que les média demandent toujours trop de details au sujet de la torture et des separations qu'elle a dû souffrir avec sa famille. Pourtant, elle répond toujours aux questions qu'on lui pose. Pourquoi? « Car le seul moyen de changer les choses est de faire savoir ce qui se passe aux personnes ordinaires. Je veux changer les choses au Soudan, alors je vais faire tout dans mon pouvoir pour faire connaître la situation là-bas ».

On entend toujours des histoires de guerre remplies de tristesse et de souffrance, puis les victimes de guerre rassemblées ici continuent de revivre les moments de torture passés. Mais comme George Santana a dit, « Ceux qui ne se rappelle pas de leur passé sont condamnés a le repeter ».







CULTURES DOVETAIL

Destiny , MB and Elvira , ON

Over the past four days 75 students from around the globe have gathered in Gimli, Manitoba, Canada to discuss children as victims of war and possible solutions. The students represent numerous cultures with different religions, values, and ways of life. The general media was not permitted to enter the hotel at which we were staying at, so to give the general public a bit of insight as to what we were up to, we are writing this article.

The first few days were "get to know each other" activities. After all, we would have to be spending the next 10 days together in Winnipeg (South of Gimli) for the official conference. We participated in activities such as painting images of war to express feelings of conflict and destruction, and we were lucky enough to have the Manitoba Theatre for Young People come and teach us other ways of communicating without words in order to help us overcome language barriers.

Overall, everyone enjoyed meeting new people from all over the globe. "It's different, being around so much diversity, it's great," said one Canadian.

And the international delegates felt about the same. "I have enjoyed meeting other people because that means I'm not alone in the feelings, emotions, hopelessness."

But the truth of the matter is, it's not hopeless because we're the next generation. If we can get together, even though all of our differences still remain, to have one common goal - to stop war - it's not at all hopeless. So, the truth of the matter is, it doesn't matter where you're from, what religion you believe in, or anything else for that matter, we're all about the same when it all boils down. And together we want to stop war.

Positive Output from the Conference

Destiny, MB, , Jenna, ON and Grace, MB

The most important problems identified by the youth involved in the International Conference for War-Affected Children were child soldiers, land mines, and that weapons should not be traded or sold to countries in conflicts of war. Other priorities included stopping child labour. Laura Rios-Quintana, originally from Mexico, is concerned mostly about the children because they cannot protect themselves from war.

An international delegate at the conference said that the main people affected by war are civilians, especially women and children. Another delegate, Esat Rexhepi, said we should, 'Stop wars, make laws against land mines, and treat children all over the world equally.' And one Canadian delegate suggested that, 'World leaders should always sit down and have peace talks first, and really honestly try and compromise. War shouldn't even be an option.'

After all these findings we asked if anything good would come from this conference. Most people believed that because the Canadian government put so much money into this, they will listen and our suggestions will be heard. One delegate said 'We have lots of input and constructive criticism. We have something really good here and that is honesty.'

The bottom line: We want to make a difference and we are going to have our voices heard!

Recommendations

At the National Forum in Gimli, the 50 Canadian and 25 International youth, in seven groups, came up with recommendations based on what they thought should be done about the problem of war-affected children.

- Allow more refugees into Canada and improve system for immigration *
- Educate children within schools about current events and refugees
- Create student welcome committees for refugees at schools
- Increase programs like ESL and FSL through the Canadian government
- Avoid economic sanctions
- Raise awareness amongst Canadians by having more international and national roundtables and conferences
- In Canada, stop producing and exporting weapons that will be used in under-developed countries
- In schools, address these issues as part of the curriculum
- In wealthier countries, reprioritize so that more money can be spent on helping others instead of personal gain
- Do not use physical intervention to stop wars, but instead support the people trying to make peace within the country by providing opportunities for negotiation of fighting parties
- Increases finances going toward the mental health of war-affected children *
- Consider and speed up the process of family reunification *
- Implement summer school to help refugees learn English, French and Spanish *
- Promote the health of individuals in war zones *
- Intervene to stop wars * (some objections)
- Do not allow child solders under 20 *
- Ban landmines, i.e. sign Ottawa treaty
- Educate children in schools about the plights of refugees
- Create more programs for war-affected children: therapy, learning programs *
- Make more jobs available to refugees and remove barriers that children are facing in terms of accessing higher education because of a lack of immigration papers *
- Find a way to encourage the UN to enforce the human rights treaties, especially the convention on the human rights of the child
- Stop selling/buying weapons to/from countries at war (some strong objections)
- Create youth organization to help sponsor other children around the world
- Concentrate on post-war effects on children as well as the war itself, i.e. famine, etc.
- Implement activities to help war-affected students interact with other students
- Encourage groups like Amnesty International and ask countries to release students being held because they are not part of a war

*Denotes points already brought up by roundtable discussions

the GIANT THE STUDENTS COMMISSION

le GÉANT LA COMMISSION DES ÉTUDIANTS

War Solutions
Powered by youth

Les solutions pour la guerre
Dirigées par les jeunes

Edition 2 / Edition no. 2

International Conference on War-Affected Children
Youth Meeting, Sept. 10 – 12, 2000

Conférence internationale sur les enfants touchés par la guerre
Réunion jeunesse du 10 au 12 sept. 2000

Sunday

Trevor, MB and Elvira, ON

The largest ministerial meeting held in Canada was kicked off on Sunday, Sept. 11th. The opening ceremonies were attended by Lloyd Axworth, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Maria Minna, Minister of International Cooperation, as well as by 75 youth from all over the world. Representatives from 143 countries, including 53 ministers will be attending the conference, which officially starts on Wednesday.

Ceremonies began with Nancy Wildgoose, Secretary-General of the conference. Wildgoose gave several shocking facts, stating that in the past 10 years, 2 million children have died as a result of war, 5 million have been injured and 10 million have been affected. There are currently 300,000 youth soldiers under the age of 18 serving in armies around the world, most serving against their will.

Minister Minna was introduced and gave a speech on various programs which are currently in place in Canada and around the world. "It's time to address these issues, find out solutions and solve them together." Minister Minna also mentioned that she has raised the budget for education, health and nutrition because "You (the youth) are part of the future."

Minister Axworthy took the floor and gave several statements. He emphasized that this conference is a "tipping agent" towards helping war-affected children. Referring to the meeting in Ghana with 50 African states, Axworthy said that there is a difference being made in the situation of war-affected children.

Minister Minna spoked briefly on Canada's role in the landmine crisis. Canada currently has several programs to remove landmines in various countries. On average, 500 people fall victim to landmines every week. "The programs run by the Canadian government are saving lives every day." said Minna.

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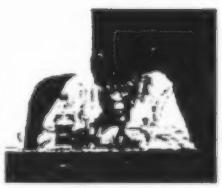

Certaines personnes n'ont pas leurs place à cette conférence

Raphael, QC

C'est ce que pensaient la trentaine de protestants de l'organisation humanitaire pour aider la situation au Soudan. Ils étaient réunis Lundi dernier devant le Fort Garry Hotel où la conférence internationale sur les enfants touchés par la guerre lieu avait.

Une des raisons importantes pour leur manifestation pacifique est la présence du ministre des affaires étrangères du Soudan Mustafa Osman Ismail.

Il est responsable de la mort de plus de 2 millions de gens dans le sud du Soudan et également de l'emprisonnement des 6000 jeunes Ugandais qui sont entrainés à combattre le gouvernement Ugandais en finançant un groupe de résistance appellé ''The Lord Resistance Army'' m'a confié Catherine Hakim une des membres de l'organisation humanitaire pour aider la situation au Soudan.

Également présent à la manifestation était le pasteur de la communauté du Soudan M. James Okot qui m'a confié que le gouvernement du Soudan étais aussi responsable de bombardement d'écoles, d'églises et d'hôpitaux. Dans un relève de presse au Soudan, il a confié à un journal, ''Nous avons touchés nos cibles'', ce qui, d'après eux, démontre que le gouvernement du Soudan a frappé ces bâtiments intentionnellement.

Delegates at the Experts Conference

The Story Behind the Media

HOW TO DEAL WITH THEM

Diana, MB

To get people interested is the number one goal of media. Whether it is radio, TV, or newspaper, they all want people to be interested in their stories. But how do they do that? This whole week, we have experienced the role of media. We were professionally trained to become journalists. Not only that, but we were also exposed to the media in some way or another. We have learned that after interviewing a person, the journalist chooses an angle, and bases their story on that angle. That may or may not be a positive thing because the angle they choose may or may not be the same as yours. We have also learned through our mistakes, and observations, how to deal with the media. The most important thing that we have learned to do is to always prepare ourselves and to think of what we are going to say before we say it. That is because anything we say could be interpreted in different ways. Therefore, we must think of how people may interpret what we are saying in order for it to not backfire towards us. We should also always try to state facts rather than opinions, because the media may look at the opinions from different angles, and misinterpret them. Also, if we list opinions, not all of them may be voiced. Finally, always cool down before an interview. So if you are not ready for one, don't do it. The reason for that is if you are under stress, then you might say things that you may regret afterwards.

The above are only some ways to deal with media, but of course they are not the only ways. You can always avoid them, and not have to deal with them

Outcome of Youth Meeting

Trevor, MB and Elvira, ON

Canadian and International youth delegates gave a press conference on Monday answering questions on the meetings that have been taking place since Sunday. Attending were Hebo, Hannady, Secret, and Faten.

"We are asking other countries to rectify the optional protocol to the convention for the rights of children that forbids the use of children under the age of eighteen as soldiers," said Hannady, summarizing one of the recommendations made at the meetings.

"We are working on an International Organization that will allow youth to say, to be heard. We already have the support of Minister Minna," reported Hebo, explaining one of the many ideas that will be put into place as a result of this conference.

Secret stated that action will follow the conference, "We are ready to move from words to action."

Children 4 Change

Myles, NWT Ashley, MB & Rose, QC

At a press briefing on Monday afternoon, five delegates emitted an aura of thoughtfulness as if they meant business while talking to the media. Even though they asked the media to slow down their speech, the youth never lost their focus of their initial intent. Media asked the delegates their opinions on how Canada is helping countries affected by war. Riyad, one of the five youth delegates at the press conference, said Canada is doing a great deal for countries that are torn up by war. He feels that Canada is playing a big part in peacekeeping. Ana, also one of the delegates at the conference, feels that Canada can help stop wars by increasing its peacekeeping role. Bismarck also feels that Canada is a major influence on a lot of countries, because of the multicultural identity of Canada.

If all the suggestions and ideas the young Canadians and the international youth brought up were put into action toward helping other war torn countries, our world would be much better. The intelligence that these people have is astounding. They are thinking about solutions that can be put into effect to help their fellow human beings. They are dedicated and decent people.

The ostentatious conference room at the Fort Garry Hotel is where the media got its first glance at these dedicated young people trying to make a difference in the lives of war affected children and their families. If there are more caring people in this world, like these young people, then we can overcome the problem of war.

Streetbeat

Destiny, MB Jen, MB and Grace, MB

The first International Conference on War-Affected Children is in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada from Sept. 11-17, 2000. We set out on the streets of Winnipeg to find out more about what people really know about the conference and war affected children.

Amazingly, a lot of people that we asked about the conference were totally misinformed about the issue, and some didn't even know there was a conference going on. That's why one of the first steps to solving world problems is communicating with each other, and making sure that we're all properly informed about the issue. Awareness makes all the difference of helping and not helping. If more people really knew what was going on in the world, more would fight to help the children and their families who are currently living in war-affected countries.

However, not all people were misinformed. One man who immigrated from Burkina Faso in Africa to Canada was very informed about the issue. "Using children to work is cheaper for companies,' he said.

We can only hope that one day everyone in the world will be as informed, if not more so, about the world around them. It would be a great first step, hopefully with many bigger steps to follow.

"...we believe that if more people really knew what was going on in the world, more would fight to help the children and their families who are currently living in war-affected countries."

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Hope's Story

Hope and Jenna

Hope was a participant in the National Youth Forum on war-affected children in Gimli MB, Sept. 6 – 9. She is now part of the youth media team at the International Conference on War-Affected Children, and shared her story with us.

To this day, I have no idea where my parents are. It has been ten years since I have seen them....If any organization could help me find my family it would be so great, because I know they are still alive somewhere.

I was born in Sudan and lived there until the war took over my country. It all started one day when I was nine years old and the rebels bombed my village. There was mass confusion and my people ran in all directions. I managed to make it out in time, but I was separated from my family. I searched everywhere but they were nowhere to be found.

I joined a group of people from the village who were fleeing. We walked seven days before we reached a refugee camp. There, I was taken for training by the military to become a child soldier. For five months I was trained. I started each morning at 5:00 a.m. with over two hundred other children. I led them in daily exercises. It was horrible

Finally, I escaped the camp walking at night by myself until I met up with a group of hunters. They saved my life. I told them of the danger I was in and that I was being followed. They took me to their small village where new problems arrived. Two military commanders fought over me to be their wife. I was twelve years old. The men said they would kill me if one of them didn't choose to back down. Once again, I fled at night through the bush. Soon after, they realized I was missing from my room and searched for me in the forest. I heard them coming so I climbed a tree. Thankfully, they never found me. After the men left, I ran in the opposite direction where I found a town. I explained my situation to the chief in the town. He understood my problem and took me into the community. I was so fortunate for this - I feel God was watching me. In this town, I went to school for the first time. For one year there was peace before war took over my life again. All this time, I had never communicated with my parents.

Everyone ran from the town until we came to another refugee camp. After a couple months I met a German nun who took me in. She changed my life completely and helped me remember the people back home. She helped me get to Canada. When I first came here, I spoke eight languages, but not English. It was so difficult living on my own without the help of anyone. It has been one year since I moved to Canada, and I am now eighteen. To this day, I have no idea where my parents are, it has been ten years since I have seen them. Yet to this day, I fight for peace in my country and will hopefully one day meet up with them again. I miss them so much. If any organization could help me find my family it would be so great, because I know they are still alive somewhere. I ask that United Nations help me find my parents. I feel like an orphan but I know I still have my parents in Sudan.

Thank you for reading my story and giving me a voice.

If you can help Hope contact her parents, please contact tgmag@tgmag.ca.

A Spider On the Wall

Rose, QC

Winnipeg, Manitoba - - Tuesday afternoon ... chants, shouts, banners ... just a few of the sights that covered the front steps of the Fort Garry Hotel. Canadian aboriginals fighting against the government, protesting a treaty that was signed two hundred years ago stating that natives cannot fish salmon or lobster. " Shame on you, Canada!" shouted one man. Many youth sat on a platform pulled by a truck. Signs floated around the air: "broken treaty, broken world", "red lobster", "red world", "smash the colonial state", "lead, follow or get of the way", "catch a fish, feed a child", "respect the inherent rights of the MI'KMAQS".

There were red flags being waved around with a yellow sun in the center along with a drawing of an indian. A chief got up on the podium and called out to the Canadian government to let them fish or there would be a lot of trouble in the future, that Canada has to listen to them, Canada has to listen to its people.

A woman with a traditional talking stick gathered around the chanters who beat their drums and chanted. A man with a flag walked up to the door of the hotel, and security followed him. Media covered him and supporters followed, many of them women and children with traditional drums and jewelry.

"We are sick and tired of welfare, this is our land and respect our land."

"We support the Burnt Church," another man shouted.

"No justice no peace!" cried out a man several times.

There was a beating drum and hollers and whistles ... "It will never be forgotten, our fish are our future, our children are our future..."

Another man reached the border of the protests. "Your ministers inside are hiding inside your walls. Why don't you come outside and meet the people who made you rich!"

Another woman shouted from the steps of the hotel, where the ministers were present. "We need to be heard! Who cares if they make fun of us!"

The media and press were everywhere, none stopped doing reports and asking questions. A few police officers were standing near the outside edge of the protest. An old man wandered back and forth pushing a shopping cart partially filled with old soda cans and with many signs.

Protestors started leaving to let the traffic flow. Many wondered and asked one another what would happen next. A woman stood up on the stairs and called out, saying that the next protest will be at the Forks at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday. Let's wait and see.

Youth Delegates Hold Press Conference

Diane, ON

Winnipeg, Canada - Four Youth Delegates from the Youth Meeting of the International Conference on War-Affected Children spoke at a press conference on Tuesday to express their opinions, their concerns, and to release a few of the recommendations which they have generated over the last few days. The delegates were the media spokespeople, which means they will be presenting to the media for the remainder of the International Conference.

At the press conference, which was moderated by another youth delegate, Riyad, the delegates answered questions presented to them by reporters. The press conference was followed by a scrum and a quick photo session.

The youth delegates seemed pleased with the conference. "I am pleased that I can finally express myself to the world," said Secret, a delegate from Liberia.

The youth expressed their reasons for coming to the conference. Some were inspiring mission statements. "I bring the dreams of every war-affected child," said Faten. Others made blunt statements with sure purpose, such as Hannady who said, "I just don't want any child to have to experience what I did."

Kids Helping Kids

Port Loko, Sierra Leone Project

Ryann, ON

In a small town on Georgian Bay, Ontario, Canada, there is a school dedicated to helping children study in Port Loko, Sierra Leone. The Victoria Harbour Elementary School, whose motto is "A School That Cares," is the headquarters for a project that sends school supplies to a small Catholic school in Port Loko, Sierra Leone, a small country in west Africa.

Schools are struggling in Sierra Leone, in part because of a civil war that is draining the country's resources.

Every child at the Harbour School is involved. Teacher/librarian Paul Delaney of Penetanguishene, Ontario, taught in Sierra Leone and brought the idea to help students back to Canada. Through a Port Loko teacher, the Harbour School community learned of the lack of pens, paper, and necessary school supplies. Students involved in the Harbour School's Student Parliament decided to do something about it in 1992.

So Operation School Supplies went into gear. The Harbour School first sent a box of supplies collected from the Harbour School kids as an admission to the school Valentine's Day dance. The Parent Teacher Group paid the postage to send the box to Port Loko every year. Since then, the Harbour School has sent things like sports equipment, shoes, cameras, and tape recorders.

Fundraising efforts earned enough money to pay for the building of a well, a holding tank and taps for clean water in Port Loko. The Harbour School also paid for a Sierra Leonean teacher's tuition, and for medical supplies.

To be able to do all of these things for Port Loko, the Victoria Harbour school holds an annual calendar fundraiser. The calendar features drawings of the students from Port Loko in Sierra Leone. The price of calendars is a minimum $5 donation.

But improving the students' lives did not stop war from touching the students of Sierra Leone. "Victoria Harbour Elementary School became aware of the atrocities that were being committed by members of the Revolutionary United Front (the RUF) under their leader, Foday Sankoh, as early as 1995 when it was learned that 22 of the children of the sister school had been abducted, and one boy burned alive," Paul Delaney, Project Coordinator writes in a Project Profile.

Harbour School students are having a hard time communicating with people in Port Loko. The International Conference for War-Affected Children is a chance to change the situation in Sierra Leone, which is why the Port Loko project sent Dwayne Collins and me. We hope that in Port Loko things are resolved and the welfare of children is taken into serious consideration.

In more recent years, word has spread and so have Harbour School's efforts. The school now helps St. Martin's Orphanage in Port Loko and sends money to Sierra Leone Bishop George Biguzzi, who uses portions of it to help child combatants rejoin society. In December 1999, the Harbour School's Foreign Affairs Committee spoke at the United Nations in New York, United States, about the plight of Sierra Leone. The ambassador of Sierra Leone commented on how moved he was that children in Canada, unlike the rest of the world, had remembered his country through these horrible times.

Other supporters for the project include the Honourable Hilary M. Weston, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, Friends from Sierra Leone, Sister Eleanor Ewerts, Heritage Community Church in Collingwood, Ontario, and representatives from various organizations who visit the Harbour School. Start in your communities to help children around the world, because every little bit really does help.

GET INVOLVED!

Information about the project can be obtained through the Victoria Harbour Elementary School website vic.scdsb.ca/site/sl_flag.html . Contact Ryann for questions or additional information through e-mail: elphur@hotmail.com

Visit our website at www.tgmag.ca

Email us at tgmag@tgmag.ca

War Solutions
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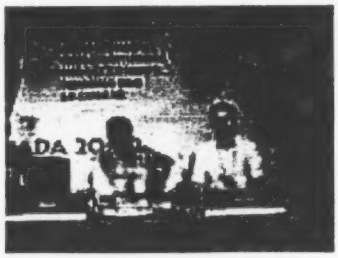
Edition 3 / Edition no. 3

International Conference on War-Affected Children
Experts Meeting, Sept. 13 – 15, 2000

Conférence internationale sur les enfants touchés par la guerre
Réunion des experts du 13 au 15 sept. 2000

There's focus among the experts

Elvira, ON, Ryann, ON



The panel at the opening of the Experts Meeting consisted of:

- Minister of International Cooperation Maria Minna
- UNICEF Director Carol Bellamy
- Under Secretary-General of the U.N. Olara Otunnu
- Special Advisor of the Graça Machel Review Stephen Lewis.
- Youth Delegates Dwayne and Secret
- Chair of the NGO Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict Kathy Vandergrift

"We are here because these things are a crime against humanity, and this must end." stated Minister Maria Minna at the opening of the Expert's Meeting at the International Conference on War-Affected Children on September 13th. The youth voice at the meeting was a strong one.

Secret and Dwayne did a wonderful job of stating the youth's opinions and recommendations. "From this conference, we hope to see practical solutions to benefit war-affected children emerge." Recommendations stressed by the youth delegates included giving a third party the ability to intervene in situations where governments don't want or aren't able to practice security measures, prevention of conflict, support of and enforcement of the Optional Protocol preventing child soldiers, and moving from words to deeds.

Kathy Vandergrift summarized a common opinion among youth and experts by saying, "Peace is every child's right." Minister Minna seemed very supportive of youth and their solutions. In her address, she believed that, "The last thing we need right now is another global talk shop," and that "Ending impunity is important, but we also need to look at prevention." Much of the applause was for Stephen Lewis, though, as he finished his address with the issue of Sudan and how that could be a good starting point to push for peace. Referring to a few personal conversations he had with representatives from Sudan, he claimed that "the victim was truth..." describing the way the Sudanese government denied and avoided the issue of abducted children. All in all, people involved in this conference are definitely focused and dedicating time to solutions to help children in conflict.

The Expert's Meeting is hosted by the Canadian Government and UNICEF. A video showing scenes of war and children in war opened the meeting. The audience was silent, and you could see tears in some of the youth's eyes. An emotional Minister Minna then stated, "These are the faces of war in the 21st century." She commented on how the children in the video have been raped, slaughtered, maimed, terrorized, physically and emotionally affected, and that this is unacceptable.

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Schools are struggling in Sierra Leone, in part because of a civil war that is draining the country's resources.

Every child at the Harbour School is involved. Teacher/librarian Paul Delaney of Penetanguishene, Ontario, taught in Sierra Leone and brought the idea to help students back to Canada. Through a Port Loko teacher, the Harbour School community learned of the lack of pens, paper, and necessary school supplies. Students involved in the Harbour School's Student Parliament decided to do something about it in 1992.

So Operation School Supplies went into gear. The Harbour School first sent a box of supplies collected from the Harbour School kids as an admission to the school Valentine's Day dance. The Parent Teacher Group paid the postage to send the box to Port Loko every year. Since then, the Harbour School has sent things like sports equipment, shoes, cameras, and tape recorders.

Fundraising efforts earned enough money to pay for the building of a well, a holding tank and taps for clean water in Port Loko. The Harbour School also paid for a Sierra Leonean teacher's tuition, and for medical supplies.

To be able to do all of these things for Port Loko, the Victoria Harbour school holds an annual calendar fundraiser. The calendar features drawings of the students from Port Loko in Sierra Leone. The price of calendars is a minimum $5 donation.

But improving the students' lives did not stop war from touching the students of Sierra Leone. "Victoria Harbour Elementary School became aware of the atrocities that were being committed by members of the Revolutionary United Front (the RUF) under their leader, Foday Sankoh, as early as 1995 when it was learned that 22 of the children of the sister school had been abducted, and one boy burned alive," Paul Delaney, Project Coordinator writes in a Project Profile.

Harbour School students are having a hard time communicating with people in Port Loko. The International Conference for War-Affected Children is a chance to change the situation in Sierra Leone, which is why the Port Loko project sent Dwayne Collins and me. We hope that in Port Loko things are resolved and the welfare of children is taken into serious consideration.

In more recent years, word has spread and so have Harbour School's efforts. The school now helps St. Martin's Orphanage in Port Loko and sends money to Sierra Leone Bishop George Biguzzi, who uses portions of it to help child combatants rejoin society. In December 1999, the Harbour School's Foreign Affairs Committee spoke at the United Nations in New York, United States, about the plight of Sierra Leone. The ambassador of Sierra Leone commented on how moved he was that children in Canada, unlike the rest of the world, had remembered his country through these horrible times.

Other supporters for the project include the Honourable Hilary M. Weston, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, Friends from Sierra Leone, Sister Eleanor Ewerts, Heritage Community Church in Collingwood, Ontario, and representatives from various organizations who visit the Harbour School. Start in your communities to help children around the world, because every little bit really does help.

GET INVOLVED!

Information about the project can be obtained through the Victoria Harbour Elementary School website vic.scdsb.ca/site/sl_flag.html. Contact Ryann for questions or additional information through e-mail: elphur@hotmail.com.

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War Solutions
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Les solutions pour la guerre
Dirigées par les jeunes

Edition 3 / Edition no. 3

International Conference on War-Affected Children
Experts Meeting, Sept. 13 – 15, 2000

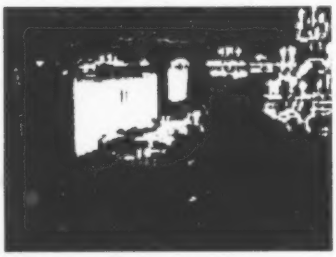
Conférence internationale sur les enfants touchés par la guerre
Réunion des experts du 13 au 15 sept. 2000

There's focus among the experts

Elvira, ON, Ryann, ON

The panel at the opening of the Experts Meeting consisted of:

- Minister of International Cooperation Maria Minna
- UNICEF Director Carol Bellamy
- Under Secretary-General of the U.N. Olara Otunnu
- Special Advisor of the Graça Machel Review Stephen Lewis.
- Youth Delegates Dwayne and Secret
- Chair of the NGO Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict Kathy Vandergrift

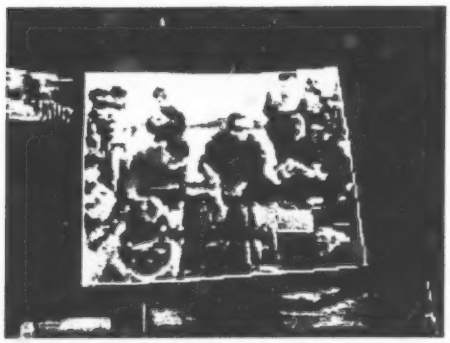


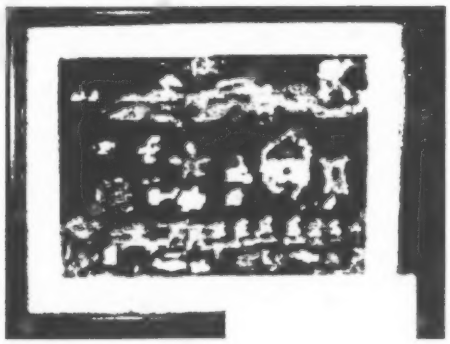
"We are here because these things are a crime against humanity, and this must end." stated Minister Maria Minna at the opening of the Expert's Meeting at the International Conference on War-Affected Children on September 13th. The youth voice at the meeting was a strong one.

Secret and Dwayne did a wonderful job of stating the youth's opinions and recommendations. "From this conference, we hope to see practical solutions to benefit war-affected children emerge." Recommendations stressed by the youth delegates included giving a third party the ability to intervene in situations where governments don't want or aren't able to practice security measures, prevention of conflict, support of and enforcement of the Optional Protocol preventing child soldiers, and moving from words to deeds.

Kathy Vandergrift summarized a common opinion among youth and experts by saying, "Peace is every child's right." Minister Minna seemed very supportive of youth and their solutions. In her address, she believed that, "The last thing we need right now is another global talk shop," and that "Ending impunity is important, but we also need to look at prevention." Much of the applause was for Stephen Lewis, though, as he finished his address with the issue of Sudan and how that could be a good starting point to push for peace. Referring to a few personal conversations he had with representatives from Sudan, he claimed that "the victim was truth..." describing the way the Sudanese government denied and avoided the issue of abducted children. All in all, people involved in this conference are definitely focused and dedicating time to solutions to help children in conflict.

The Expert's Meeting is hosted by the Canadian Government and UNICEF. A video showing scenes of war and children in war opened the meeting. The audience was silent, and you could see tears in some of the youth's eyes. An emotional Minister Minna then stated, "These are the faces of war in the 21st century." She commented on how the children in the video have been raped, slaughtered, maimed, terrorized, physically and emotionally affected, and that this is unacceptable.





From weapons to art

Emmanuel, ON and Armando, ON

Mayor Glen's office on Main Street in Winnipeg is holding an art exhibit from Mozambique from September 10 – 17. This exhibit will be touring all across Canada to Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Halifax, Saskatoon and Vancouver. The exhibit is about sculptures made of destroyed weapons and pictures of the process of making them. The sculptures are very creative and show us the only good use of weapons. The project was created by the Christian Council of Mozambique (CCM) in 1995 and it offers incentives for exchanging weapons. The objective of the project is to encourage people to participate in peacebuilding activities and to embrace peace. Works were shown by artists such as Kester, Micas, Fiel, Celestino, Humberto, Kester, and many others.

hope for children

Ashley, MB

Children need to be protected. That is the belief voiced by Roz Prober, Norman Boudreau, David Matas, and Bruce Harris at a session at the Experts Meeting at the International Conference on War-Affected Children. They are a part of Beyond Borders, an organization that is working to protect children from being sexually abused and sexually exploited.

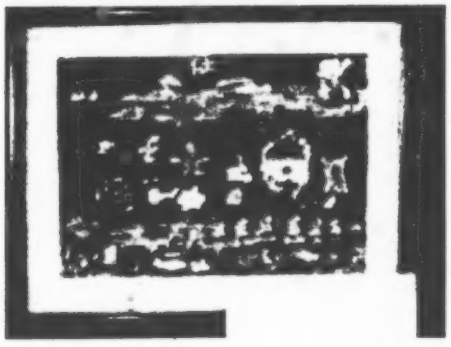
Sex tourism happens everywhere; it's a global problem. Children on the streets are preyed upon because they are easy targets. The new region for sexually abused children is in Central America. There, tourists from around the world come and take advantage of the children in poverty-stricken areas. In San Jose (Costa Rica's capitol city) alone, one million tourists visit each year, and over 300, 000 children are sexually abused.

Fortunately, there is hope for these children in third world countries. Canada, among other countries, has signed a convention to protect children from sexual exploitation. Canada is also one of 20 countries enacting new laws to protect children from sexual abuse. Through these laws, if a citizen from one of those countries commits a crime regarding sex tourism in another country, they can be convicted back home. Such is the case regarding a university professor from Florida and a millionaire from New York City. They sexually exploited 10, 11, and 12 year olds overseas, and were sentenced to 125 years in jail in the U.S.

Canadians are involved in sex tourism, and 4 cases are currently under investigation in Canada, one of which is in Manitoba. We, as citizens, need to put a stop to this. We cannot let the children of the future be hurt. We cannot let the children be scarred. Children who are abused carry awful memories with them for life. We can help them. We can give them a better life. We can show that we care. Youth, says Roz, is a powerful voice in making changes. And we can make the difference to these children.

GETTING INVOLVED...

On the Beyond Borders website, www.beyondborders.org there are ways that we can get involved. Youth can get involved by visiting a part of the web site regarding ECPAT (End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism).



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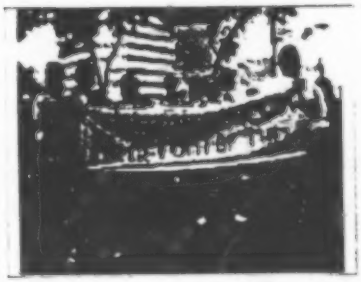
Wake up Canada!

Natalie, MB



On September 12, angry Native protesters gathered in front of the Fort Garry Hotel to battle the ongoing issue of Burnt Church. Their goal was to give a clear and simple message to the ministers gathered there: Canada is also fighting a war.

The issue on which the protest was centred is one that has been of great concern to Canadian Natives, when boats were ceased and a chief was arrested a few weeks ago. "Though the issue seems complicated at times, the solutions are simple and simply common sense. Let them fish; just let it be fair," said Albert Keesick Sr.

Another complaint was the fact that even though Canada was declared the best place to live in by the United Nations, the native population is living in third world conditions. "Hospitals and streets are full of our people. Most natives are on welfare. This is *our* land," said Bill Traverse

"Canada is ignoring our rights. They're just sitting back denying our right to make a living and get our people off welfare," said one protester.

The main slogan used for the protest was "No justice, no peace". When protestors were asked why they had chosen this, they said the explanation is simple. If Canada served justice to the native people, internal problems would be resolved and we would be able to take a step in the right direction.

Courtney, one of the national delegates at the International Conference on War Affected Children, says that people don't understand the significance of treaties. A few solutions she suggested: "Love your culture, show the natives that people care and stop racism." Another interesting thing she pointed is that the stereotype that natives don't like reserves is not true. " I love the reserve. It's the only place to which I can go and not be victim of racism and rude comments. We should keep reserves."

The protesters also want one more thing to be heard in connection with the International Conference on War Affected Children; "You have to respect your own culture before you can respect someone else's".

Canada's internal war on aboriginals

Courtney, MB

Canada should realize that we are having our own silent war inside our country. We should take care of our own human rights problem before we go and jump to help other countries in need. Canadians need to realize that we are having a war on the Aboriginal people of Canada. We really have to think of some of the stuff that my people have actually gone through, like residential schools that aboriginal children and youth were forced to go to. These schools made aboriginal children change their whole lives around. How would the average Canadian like it if they weren't allowed to speak their own language, practice their culture and were sexually and physically abused?

But something good should've came out of it… treaties. Treaties were made nation to nation through Sacred Ceremonies, charters an legal documentations. They were and still are considered sacred and therefore they are not negotiable. The First Nations respected and honoured these agreements by surrendering their lands and freedom as a Sovereign Nation - while the Canadian government viewed them as temporary agreements to be amended and altered by governments of today. The story of aboriginal children is missing from the International Conference on War-Affected Children. In the years to follow we need to include a focus on our own country as well as others.

A historical night

Ashley, MB

At the International Conference on War-Affected Children, we hear about people from different cultures fighting each other and different ethnic groups fighting each other. But for the youth of the conference, their different cultures means an opportunity to learn about each other and about themselves. When the evening comes, everyone loses their titles. The youth are no longer international delegates or Canadian delegates, or youth media, they are just friends.

When invited by Mayor Glen Murray to go on a historical train ride, the youth present at the International Conference gladly accepted. The train departed from Prairie Dog Central at 7:30 PM, heading for the Hitch'n Post. There, a BBQ of chicken, corn, potatoes, and rolls was waiting for them. It was a delicious meal. Apple crisp and ice cream was served for dessert.

It was a night of fun. Some delegates had a tower of pop cans going, others were dancing, and some people were just hanging out and having a good time. A group called the Pushing Daisies were playing and we danced to that.

The evening demonstrated, once again, that the youth of the conference are good friends and that all are enjoying themelves.

"For the youth of the conference, their different cultures means an opportunity to learn about each other."

The darker side

Diana, MB

We often think of war as soldiers fighting with other soldiers. Shooting against shooting, killing against killing, and hatred against hatred. But there is much more to war than that. There is another side that everyone seems to forget, the darker side of war. That is the side that other people don't see, except for those who are experiencing it, or have experienced it. There are children that suffer from war, and no-one remembers. There are women whose rights get taken away, but no-one notices. There are men that get forced to do things they don't want to do, but no-one cares.

Girl soldiers make up thirty percent of the military in some countries in Africa. They may be abducted, and forced into fighting. Other times, they are given as "wives" to soldiers – some as young as ten.

Informing people about the bad things that go on in the war zones is the only way to get people to remember, notice and care. This message is to ask people that, if you are ever thinking about wars that go on in the world, always remember the darker side of it.

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War Solutions
Powered by youth

Les solutions pour la guerre
Dirigées par les jeunes

Edition 4 / Edition no. 4

Youth Keynote:

Closing of Youth Meeting at the International Conference September 12, 2000

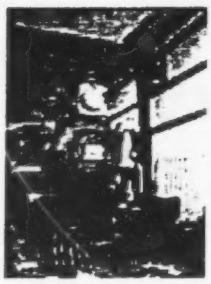
presented by Dwayne and Secret

Ladies and gentlemen, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to let us voice our ideas and opinions involving war-affected children in this international setting. Being able to work with experts from around the world not only motivated us to make a difference, but also gave us concrete ideas of how to start.

We would like to put our words into action by creating an international organization of youth responsible to support the implementation of the recommendations made here regarding children and youth affected by war. With political and financial support from governments and NGOs, our recommendations would become realities. During this conference we met with Minister Minna who indicated her support for this project. Last night we met with Mr. Otunnu, who discussed our participation in a movement for the protection of war-affected children. This would include children-to-children networks, advocacy campaigns and a youth advisory council that would provide advice and support to his office. We can see that the time has come for co-operation between the youth and adults on the issue of war affected children. Let's make it possible for the voice of children to be heard in the global community. This organization could do this through activities such as lobbying, pressuring governments and running campaigns to adopt better policies concerning children and war. In addition to these tactics we would also like to use resources that are currently available to create a worldwide network of youth which will be focussed on this issue, and determined to make life better for those who are suffering. Holding discussions and workshops to educate children regarding their rights, advising and facilitating program development and identifying priorities for research are some examples of what the youth can do if the opportunity would be given.

Your support will not only help to implement article 12 of the convention on the right of the child, but will also set an example for other nations to put youth participation into practice. By working together we will be one step closer to war prevention and peace building.

During the past week we've seen and heard stories from the young victims of war. We are tired of only being the victims, we want to be the ones who make a difference. A change must be made. We urge experts and organizations to work with us in making this project become our reality.



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International Conference on War-Affected Children: Experts Meeting, Sept. 13 – 15, 2000

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The Media & Conflict

Krista, ON

What can the media do for people in war zones? More importantly, what *should* they be doing? That was the topic of discussion for the morning panel on September 14, 2000 at the International Conference on War-Affected Children.

The first speaker was Kwasi Appenteng. Kwasi believes that the media could affect the outcome of a conflict, but are often ignored or taken for granted. Not only should the media be active participants in conflict situations by spreading information and telling the true story, but they are also critical to conflict resolution. Using local languages and creative ways to present the information would promote awareness in conflict areas about what is happening.

Kwasi also believes that a conscious shift in the mentality and function of the media is needed. There needs to be a new emphasis placed on human rights – they are often not considered "sexy" and are therefore not popular news topics. Children's rights, according to Kwasi, should be especially emphasized, and morals and ethics need to be discussed more in the media. An additional problem that Kwasi brought up is that in some countries, the state controls the information and is used too often as a source of information by the media.

The next person to speak was Gordana, a Bosnian who is now part of the Canadian Journalists for Free Expression. Gordana mentioned both positive and negative aspects of media coverage. On the positive side, she told two stories of girls during the war in Bosnia and how the media awareness of their lives had motivated many people to help the Bosnians during the war in that region. On the negative side, she spoke about how journalists often try to hide some facts to make the story "digestible" but how she felt it was important to write about the realities of war.

The third and final speaker was Shelley Saywell, who creates documentaries as an independent filmmaker. Saywell said that there is less interest in documentaries because many people are not interested in exploring the stories they hear on the news in-depth. She also spoke of what she calls "compassion fatigue," when people hear too much of a story and don't feel any sympathy for it anymore.

The morning's discussion ended with a period where audience members, who were mainly part of the media, were given the chance to ask questions about the speeches and experiences of the speakers. The discussion continued in the afternoon.

What Actions Youth Can Take

- Letters to editors, radio stations (ie. Talk radio), television stations, etc. to make the media know that we want to hear about these issues!
- Youth should endeavour to make the issues known in their own countries and around the world (ie. Through youth media organizations).
- Encourage major media organizations to have a youth reporter / youth voice represented in their reporting.

Youth Recommendations

- Media content should be regulated so as to ensure that international issues are more likely to be reported.
- Media led by youth should be created and supported in conflict situations and that information should be broadcasted throughout the world.
- Media should remain impartial in reporting on the issues.
- Information should be readily available to all citizens of countries so that they are aware of what is going on in their nation.
- Governments should not be allowed to censor the media.
- Reports on conflicts should be better researched and not far-fetched.
- The media should not give out information that may endanger the security or safety of youth; their safety needs come first, not the stories.
- Less restrictions should be placed on media reporting about youth issues in war-affected countries.
- More attention should be placed on children on children in war-affected countries.

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Youth workshops brighter future

Laura, ON

This past week, the youth media team has done an amazing job of organizing both French and English workshops on war affected children, which they presented to Winnipeg high schools students with the goal of creating awareness and promoting understanding of what goes on in conflict-affected countries.

In small groups, they traveled to different schools to talk about military weapons, landmines, and several disturbing statistics, which often shocked the majority of the students. During these workshops, they asked the students to draw pictures of their perspectives on war, visualize themselves in war-affected areas, and answer multiple choice questions about money spent on military weapons and percentages of young children affected by war.

"Once they started hearing the facts and learning more about it, their faces dropped," explains Courtney, a 16 year old student at Elmwood High. "Most kids don't watch the news so they don't really know what's going on."

Although this may be the case, many youth claim that the media doesn't cover half of what's going on in the world. "The media wants a gritty story and will only cover things they know people want to hear about," explains Destiny, who is also a Winnipeg student attending St. Johns High school.

Several of the presentations including a slide show consisting of pictures taken at the National Youth Forum and during the International conference. Some of the pictures showed youth creating silhouettes, which were decorated to represent the physical and emotional scars of children who are victims of war. Other pictures showed the media team interacting with ministerial leaders, getting active online, and interacting with other youth from around the world.

"Because of doing the workshops," says Jenna, a 16 year old who traveled from Sioux Lookout, Ontario for the conference, "we know that future youth are more informed and hopefully will get involve to create a brighter future for us all."

We're gonna F-I-G-H-T for the P-E-A-C-E, We're gonna fight for the rights of the children of the war ... GOOOOOO YOUTH!

Fighting together for a better world

Armando, ON, Ryann, ON

On Thursday, September 14th, the youth went to a delicious dinner and discussion with Olara Otunnu, Special Representative to the UN Secretary-General of the UN, at the brand-new Thunderbird House in Winnipeg. "I think it's very important for young people to believe in themselves," said Olara while discussing with the youth ideas and issues on the topic of war-affected children. During the discussion, youth were able to express themselves and to ask questions. Mr. Otunnu clearly believes that this Winnipeg conference is an opportunity for youth to create a movement that will take the words of youth and turn them into actions. To the youth, Mr. Otunnu's proposals are a positive piece of the conference puzzle. With Olara Otunnu's power in the UN, charisma, and desire to put these proposals into action, youth of the world can look forward to a better future.

Conflict Diamonds

Krista, ON

Diamonds have been recognized for centuries as symbols of beauty and purity, and have earned the title "A girl's best friend." However, as Olara Otunnu mentioned at his dinner with youth on September 14, there is a darker side to these gemstones as well. Less people are aware of this, but these stones have resulted in immense devastation across Africa. Conflict diamonds, also known as blood diamonds, are diamonds that originate from areas where they are under the control of a group fighting the legitimate government of that country. Such is the case in countries such as Sierra Leone, Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Rebel armies sell the diamonds for food and arms for their troops, and the trade is very profitable. In Sierra Leone, the diamonds sold by the rebel army have financed the killing, displacement and mutilation of millions of people. Similar acts of cruelty have taken place in Angola and Congo, also by armies supported by conflict diamonds. During the first war in Angola, the leader of the UNITA rebel organization gained $4 billion, some of which was used to finance another war. Only an approximate 4% of diamonds originate from areas of war, but this percentage represents an incredibly lucrative business for those in control.

While the international community can limit the purchase of diamonds from the country in conflict, it is difficult to stop the smuggling of blood diamonds to neighbouring countries where they are traded as having come from that country. Diamonds all have Certificates of Origin stating where they come from, and according to international agreements, a rough diamond should have the same Certificate of Origin regardless of how often it is traded before becoming a polished stone. Diamonds from areas of conflict are given incorrect Certificates of Origin.

Progress has been made in halting the illegal diamond trade. A method of diamond "fingerprinting" is being developed in Canada that can identify the diamond's precise origin. This will make it more difficult for smuggled diamonds to go unnoticed. De Beers, the company that controls about 70% of the world diamond market, has said it will guarantee that none of its diamonds come from war zones.

While the issue of conflict diamonds has recently been gaining more recognition internationally, there is still much to be done in stopping the problem and in halting the trade of these stones. People must be aware of what is happening and they must consider potential diamond purchases much more carefully. Action can be taken by spreading awareness of the problem so diamond buyers can make the right decisions and properly research the stone they are buying. Letters can be written to companies selling diamonds to pressure them to ensure that the diamonds do not originate from conflict situations.

A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing: the Iraq Sanctions

Natalie , MB

Sanctions. The very word makes most of the delegates at the International Conference on War-Affected Children cringe. "When sanctions were imposed on my country (Iraq), we had no paper, no pens. All the doctors left because there was no medicine and they weren't getting paid," says Ewar, a 17-year-old teenager from Iraq who now lives in Canada. "There are better ways of doing things, sanctions aren't fair".

What is the Canadian government doing to stop the impact of sanctions on people? Not enough say many. "Sanctions shouldn't even be legal. With them, you hurt your own people instead of helping them; it becomes a vicious cycle" said one delegate. "The government should influence Saddam Hussein through other methods".

On September 13, 2000 a protest opposing the sanctions on Iraq was organised outside Fort Garry Hotel, where meetings for the International Conference were taking place. Many youth delegates wished to join them to show their support for the protest.

It is clear that sanctions are a very controversial issue. Fortunately, economic sanctions are one of the issues being discussed here this week. Many youth believe they are wrong, but at least at this conference they have opportunities to try to make changes by voicing their opinions. Otheractions can also be taken to stop sanctions and prevent their long lasting effects. And maybe one day the gentle looking wolf that is attacking Iraq will give way to a nation of fairness and peace.

Cool opportunities to STAY INVOLVED

Want to be a reporter??

Tiny Giant Magazine is looking for young, dynamic reporters to write for the tgmag site. That means you! Check on the writer's guidelines at www.tgmag.ca and email us with story ideas, tgmag@tgmag.ca or sarah@tgmag.ca.

Want to go to more conferences?

So, two weeks of no sleep and hard work was the best time of your life, right?? Well, we always have MORE OPPORTUNITIES to get involved. Keep checking the tgmag website for details! (www.tgmag.ca)

Generation Peace

War Child works with the music industry to help children traumatized by war. War Child's Generation Peace Project is a way for youth in Canada to get involved and help children in war affected areas around the world. It's a chance for you to prove you care by creating your own local, national or international project. You can use music, art, drama, film or other forms of entertainment to help people understand, make people aware, and initiate action for peace and human rights.

Create your project. Find your style. Choose a medium. Make an impact.

We want you to GET INVOLVED in Generation Peace.

Contact

613.562.3334

Email Brigette Kenny, Youth Project Director at: brigette@warchild.ca

Media Team Update

The Students Commission Staff of Mo, Kristin, Jeff, Michelle and Krista give a STANDING OVATION and big hugs to the excellent, fabulous, enthusiastic media team for your dedication and hard work this week. Here's what we've accomplished in seven days!

- covered events during the International Conference from September 10 - 17
- produced four newsletters on the International Conference
- created a website on with reporting from the International Conference (can be found by going to www.tgmag.ca and clicking on the "War-Affected Children" link)
- gave a presentation to Minister Axworthy's office on the National Forum at Gimli
- developed a workshop on war-affected children to deliver to high school students
- gave 20 workshops at 8 schools in Winnipeg on war-affected children
- grew to love and adore our brave, fearless and always correct leaders, Mo, Krista, Jeff, Kristin and Michelle
- acted as media liason officers for international and Canadian delegates
- participated in a webchat with Minister Axworthy and a webcast with Unicef head of radio South Asia
- gave interviews to print, radio and tv media
- gave a dynamic presentation the International Conference to about 80,000 people at the War Child concert (you should've heard the cheers!)
- taught the "we're going to F-I-G-H-T for the P-E-A-C-E cheer" to 80,000 people at the War Child concert

Oh yeah, and kept the media room clean at all times, and were always places on time. Hee hee!! **WE LOVE YOU ALL AND WE'RE GOING TO MISS YOU!!** You can email us at tgmag@tgmag.ca.

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Tiny GIANT THE STUDENTS COMMISSION

Le GÉANT

BEYOND...

- Youth, both Canadian and international, chaperones, and staff from The Students Commission have bonded into a determined group, committed to maintaining the momentum from Winnipeg. The Students Commission is providing a central point of contact for many of them.
- The Children as Peacebuilders project continues to work with the international delegates, under the leadership of Linda Dale.
- A listserve has been set up, and delegates, chaperones who have email have been corresponding with the list-serve and with each other in groups.
- Discussions have been occurring about the structure, name and activities of the network.
- A private collaborative working space and discussion forum has been set up and is being managed by two delegates: called Community for Peace.
- The report, the recommendations and the workshop are up on the internet at www.tgmag.ca. A public discussion area is available there for those who haven't or can't join the community.
- Delegates have given an additional 25 workshops and presentations in their home communities with more being planned. They have been using the Roundtables video, together with the workshop they produced. Delegates have also continued to create media awareness, including interviews in Halifax, a French roundtable with TQS and a YTV special.
- Delegates have met in Halifax, Montreal, Winnipeg, Toronto, and Vancouver to plan additional efforts and projects. Projects are underway in all of these cities. Youth are being encouraged to work with other organizations, such as WarChild, the Red Cross, UNICEF, and Amnesty International as they create these projects.
- Requests for support have been received from the Palestinian international delegates and chaperones during the current crisis there, and support has been sent via email and the endorsement of a letter they have drafted for Olara Otunnu's official.

- Linda Dale, from The Children as Peacebuilders Project, has been in touch with almost all of the international delegates, who are all extremely pleased with the promise of the $1,000 educational scholarship for each of the international delegates announced by Minister Axworthy during the conference.

- Activity of the international delegates will continue under the Children as Peacebuilders Project. For example, the Sierra Leoneon delegate has set up a youth group to work on gender issues.
- Otunnu's office has been in frequent contact, with The Students Commission office, providing updated material to forward to youth delegates and following their progress.
- Several youth delegates met with Minister Minna to follow up on her promises.
- A meeting has been held with Save the Children re the UNGAS process, and they will be mailing to youth delegates ways to get involved in the process.
- A mailing reporting on what's been happening is planned for everyone.

- The Students Commission is just finishing a video of the entire event, which will outline youth participation, and will be circulated to youth for them to continue to use in their presentations and workshops.
- The Students Commission, with its new Centre of Excellence on Youth Engagement, is committed to researching, describing, and disseminating information about youth participation, both in Canada and internationally and through the Centre will follow the progress of the youth delegates in their future endeavours.

EVALUATION and RECOMMENDATIONS

Organizational Point of View

Planning for The National Forum itself was effective and efficient. Objectives were set early and clearly with the Centre for Foreign Policy and provided a clear path to plan towards, measure proposed activities against and evaluate results. It kept us on track, with the ability to focus on delivery of the results desired, particularly as we acquired new partners and players with the additional events.

Next time: we would like to do more training of facilitators, prior to the event, and more material for them, related to content for the event, so that less information is pushed at delegates from the front on the room.

Next time: we would advocate that there not be a division between Canadian and international delegates in a program such as this.

Next time: we would do some stronger training for delegates on "listening" skills, and non-verbal skills, and effective use of silence, when combining youth of different cultures.

Next time: as the music, dance, games, art worked very well, next time we would plan a stronger integration of these into the absorption, transfer, and processing of "content."

In terms of how The National Forum became part of a series of other events, it would have be less stressful for all involved and more seamless sequence for youth participants, if all parties at the table had brought to the planning process a set of objectives and desired outcomes, which could have been shared. Collective planning was not done early enough for the post National Forum events into which the Canadian delegates fed. It would also be our opinion that many of the decision-makers of the youth participation piece in Winnipeg did not have enough large-scale youth participation experience and this led to the creation of some problems for youth:

a) a state of high anxiety among staff regarding security issues, particularly young, poorly trained, sometimes hysterical liaison officers (time restraints). This meant the entire group was always moving, even walking from one building to another, as a group of 60-70 people

b) an exhausting lack of free time

c) a lack of youth leadership at the front of the room in the running of the program and preparing delegates for their roles

There was difficulty bringing together so many partners (the Secretariat, CIDA, DFAIT, the ngo working group, UNICEF (Susan Fountain, facilitator), the Children as Peacebuilders project (Linda Dale, international youth) and The Students Commission. This was a tremendous pool of talent, expertise and commitment, but while we shared what we could during the two months of planning together that we had, what emerged was several different groups, each in charge of a discreet piece. What failed to emerge was a cohesive team with a collective vision and strong leadership. This meant the strength of the partners was not leveraged as well as it could have been during the event, and additional stress on staff during the event itself. As well, certain elements of the program, once started, didn't get carried forward through the program as well as they might. This lack of cohesiveness looks as if it will also affect how well youth are supported to carry on beyond the event.

Media pressures were huge during the event, because of the dramatic nature of the topic and the stories of the youth. Media was handled very successfully in Gimli, because we had more control of the venue, and the time slot which we granted media interviews. With Peter Moore and Tim Wilbur, heading it up, we were able to ensure that youth delegates were accompanied by a staff person. Once in Winnipeg, there was a greater number of media requesting interviews and we had to juggle the process for handling the pressure in a jam-packed program with no free time in it. There was excellent co-operation and support from the Conference Media Team, Brigitte Duschene, Mike Shaughnessy and others . The central issue became that telling their war stories was emotional, stressful and painful for youth; they had come to talk about ending war and promoting peace. The media needed their backgrounds to set the context for their stories, and each interviewer wanted to hear it for themselves. Eventually we were able to work out compromises with many of the media, and the coverage was considered to be a huge success. A recommendation coming from the media themselves is an excellent one: in cases like this where the youth stories are so personal, that the personal story be collected prior to the event and written down. This way the youth does not have to tell the story again and again, but it can be provided as a backgrounder to the reporter. This would enable the Communications staff to set parameters for the interview, which are outlined clearly to the press, prior to the interview (no questions on the personal story, no photo, or photo permitted etc.)

There are more specific details and recommendations on the Media Outreach Program in its section of this Report.

The event achieved its objectives:
The National Forum brought together a diverse group of young Canadians, with war-affected experience and/or knowledge of the issues. It was mostly a group of young people who normally don't attend conferences. They have held a comprehensive set of discussions, shared a wide variety of experiences and stories with each other, written a comprehensive set of recommendations, and become committed to sharing what they have learned with others.

Youth Perspective:

Youth evaluations of the event are as follows:

- powerful, moving, inspiring
- security requirements in Winnipeg were unrespectful, and stressful
- not enough free time in Winnipeg
- not enough time to prepare speeches, presentations appropriately
- youth participation should be "youth friendly." We should not be forced to become adults, but be welcomed to participate as youth – in our language, in our style, in our spaces: a common comment was that youth wished the whole event looked and felt more like the time spent in Gimli. (It should be noted that this is a challenge, as the Gimli event was "youth" only and as the delegates moved into Winnipeg, it became an adult event with youth participants. Nonetheless, this recommendation by youth is an interesting one, that bears thinking about in terms of how youth participate in adult events.)

Youth participants were thrilled with their success and their sense of having made a difference. They were thrilled with the recognition and promises made by leaders like Axworthy, Minna and Otunnu. A challenge here is that youth do not understand the subtle distinctions which may underlie the promises and careful words which leaders use in public pronouncements. Therefore many "Canadian" youth took away the assumption that the support promised also applied to them. As well, youth do not understand that often promises have to be administered through existing programs or funding mechanisms. There needs to be follow-up support to keep commitments made, in the way in which youth understood them, not just technically, or else greater clarity when those promises are made, otherwise disillusionment and loss of commitment will occur for the youth

None of this evaluation should be taken out of context or construed as suggesting that the event was negative or should not have happened. It is recorded here to assist anyone, particularly ourselves as The Students Commission, looking to encourage youth engagement and participation. All in all, we, and the youth we recruited to this event, told us it was a huge success, with an enormous positive impact on the young people who participated.

The measure of the success is the effort these young people continue to expend, even as the official file closes in Ottawa.